TOWARDS A THEORY OF THE IMAGINATION

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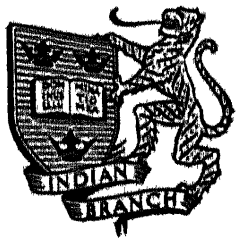

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IN MEMORY OF MY TEACHER
KIRAN CHANDRA MUKHERJI
WHO INTRODUCED ME TO THE
FASCINATING STUDY OF AESTHETICS

PREFACE

IN the following pages, I have tried to explore the nature of the imagination as expressed in poetry and prose. The discussions centre on what I consider the main problem in aesthetics — the relation between form and content, or, to put it in another way, the determination of the place of intellectual activity in creative art. Along with this I have discussed such allied questions as the relation between art and reality or truth, the potentialities of the different arts and the capacities and limitations of their media. I have less than a layman's acquaintance with the intricacies of music and the visual arts, and have, therefore, refrained from entering into detailed discussions of them. As I have said, it is the mystery of the poetic imagination that I have tried to fathom, and I have referred to the other arts only in so far as they might help this inquiry.

The book is divided into two parts. The first discusses the views of certain celebrated critics, mainly English, and in the second I have gathered together the threads of the argument in order to put forward some tentative conclusions of mine own. Many great thinkers have written on aesthetics, but I have chosen only those amongst them who, in my opinion, have made the most valuable contributions to the problems discussed here, or at least, have been of the greatest use to me in formulating my own conclusions. That is the only apology I can make for excluding such writers as Aristotle and Longinus among the ancients and Kant, Hegel, De Sanctis and Lipps among the moderns, and others too numerous

to mention. Even the treatment of the selected authors may seem to be fragmentary, but I am concerned with certain critical principles rather than with the views of particular authors.

As Plato, one of the earliest writers on aesthetics, raises a fundamental question about the value of poetry and painting and their relation to reality and truth, an examination of his views has seemed to me to be a convenient introduction to the discussions that follow. In the three succeeding chapters, I take up three idealist thinkers — Coleridge, Pater and Croce; though there are differences among them in details, all of them look upon art as the creation of an indwelling spirit. From these I pass on to thinkers who may, in different senses of the term, be called realists — Marx and his followers, and Samuel Alexander. Although these writers do not ignore the presence of a creative power which distinguishes the artist from the ordinary man, they lay emphasis — in my opinion, an exaggerated emphasis — on external forces which exercise, according to them, a determining influence on the activity of the imagination. Marxists stress the primacy of socio-economic factors whereas Alexander dwells on the importance of the materials used by artists. The inquiry into Alexander's aesthetics may lead the student of poetry naturally to the theories and critical writings of I. A. Richards, William Empson, Caroline Spurgeon, G. Wilson Knight and E.M.W. Tillyard. Empson is a disciple of Richards, but Spurgeon, Wilson Knight and Tillyard follow methods of their own. What is common to all of them is that they trace

the significance of poetry to the medium of poetic expression — verbal images, symbols and constructions. The 'meaning of meaning' is the starting-point of Indian aesthetics also, and the first part of the present work concludes with an examination of the theories of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, the two most distinguished Sanskrit writers on poetics.

The second part summarizes, puts together, and gives completeness to conclusions suggested in the first. I should mention here that the scheme adopted by me involves occasional repetitions, because the same problems are discussed from various points of view in the two parts and the different chapters. But I hope that whenever there is a repetition, it is justified by the novelty of the context.

I am indebted to my friend Professor G. N. Bhattacharyya, M.A. for reading over chapters I and IV and to my friend Professor T. N. Sen, M.A. for reading over chapters II and III. While expressing my gratitude to them for suggesting many improvements, I think it fair to say that the opinions (as well as the errors) are all mine. I take this opportunity of thanking Mr Frederick Page for editing the manuscript and for assistance in seeing it through the press.

The Index I owe to my pupil Mr Bhabatosh Chatterjee, M.A., D.PHIL., who has also helped me with criticism and advice.

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PART ONE

CHAPTER I

Plato[1]

I

PLATO is one of the greatest philosophers of the world and also one of the greatest poets writing in prose. Yet, strangely enough, he wrote a severe indictment of poetry and even said that poets would have no place in the Republic planned by him. Some people think that Plato's condemnation of poetry has only a limited application, for he lived at a time when Athens was worsted by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War, and naturally an Athenian might set up warlike, unpoetical Sparta as the ideal state and attribute the plight of Athens to the softening influence of poetry and the fine arts. It has been pointed out, too, that the ancient Athenians had no authoritative books on theology and religion, so that they turned to the poets for instruction in these subjects. This, it seems, led to a fundamental misconception of poetry in which the Greeks looked for truth and moral lessons rather than for the particular experience we call aesthetic delight. It is significant that although in the *Symposium* and other dialogues, Plato often speaks of Beauty in its different manifestations, he seldom refers to the pure aesthetic appeal of poetry. Obviously for him poetry meant stories that lay claim to being true and morally valuable, and it is by these standards that he

judged poets and poetry. Plato did not separate the referential use of language from the emotive. If language did not make correct reference, so much the worse, he thought, for such language and the emotions aroused by it.

It must be said at once that Plato's condemnation of poetry has more than a mere topical significance, and for poetry to be spiritually valuable, it must survive Plato's indictment, which has to be set forth clearly before it can be adequately examined. In the *Republic* (III), Plato draws a simple, almost a crude, distinction between the content and form of poetry. The content of poetry, according to him, embraces the story, the thoughts and the emotions, and the form means the mode — dramatic or epical — in which the content is presented and the stylistic qualities such as the music or the rhythm and harmony of the verses in which, whatever the mode, the poet expresses his thoughts and feelings. Plato believes that the musical qualities of poetry are valuable, because music is based on the principle of harmony, on the reconciliation of opposites, and is, therefore, able not only to generate in its votaries a love for order but also to give them an insight into the central harmony of the universe. The advantage of rhythm and harmony is that they 'sink deep into the recesses of the soul and take the strongest hold there, bringing that grace of body and mind which is only to be found in one who is brought up in the right way'.[2]

Thus we find that Plato always relates art to life and the

beauty of art for him is only an image of the beauty of life; the effluence of fair works flows into the eye like a health-giving breeze from a purer region and insensibly draws the soul from earliest times into sympathy with the beauty of reason. No wonder that for him the style of art and poetry has no importance of its own; he regards it only as a poetical colouring which may be removed from the subject-matter. Art is the image of life and style the image of the content. Plato rarely speaks of the visual arts, but when he does mention them, he says that sculpture and architecture must not exhibit the forms of vice and intemperance and meanness and indecency.[3] And so with literature, which, of all the arts, has the richest body of ideas, and poets must be compelled, on pain of expulsion from the state, to express the image of the good in their works. Of all arts, music is said to be the most independent of content, and yet Plato, who is fully alive to its rhythmic values, rejects Lydian and Ionian harmonies for defects he finds in their content and accepts only such music as expresses not merely a harmonious but also a courageous life.[4]

II

If we exclude the musical and metrical elements of poetry which Plato thinks are superadded to it, our judgement must depend primarily on the subject, the stories and their morals and the feelings and their effects. Poetry is to be tolerated and will be usefully employed if it draws noble portraits of men and gods and is to be

rejected if it paints heroes as effeminate and gods as the source of evil. Without going into details of what may be accepted and what is reprehensible, we may say that Plato looks upon poems and paintings as imitations of life rather than as independent, self-governing creations. It is, indeed, true that in the *Philebus*, he speaks of shapes which are beautiful for no particular reason or purpose but are desirable only as forms. But such clues to an appreciation of pure beauty are exceedingly rare; the fact remains that Plato fails to bring out the aesthetic quality of art and poetry, because he looks upon art only as an imitation of life and as a guide to practical knowledge. It is because of this failure that Plato cannot distinguish between art and craft and sometimes judges poetry by standards that are applicable to shoemaking.

Yet Plato's indictment is not to be lightly passed over, because it raises a fundamental question: Is poetry merely sport and play or has it any serious significance? If a poet is a man singing of the joys and sorrows of man, what is the relation of his creations to life and to ultimate reality? In the Tenth Book of the *Republic*, Plato mentions three kinds of reality: (*i*) the Ideas or Forms which may be described as the eternal verities, (*ii*) the world of nature and of human beings and also of the things made by man in course of his daily life, the world, in short, of mundane existence, and (*iii*) poetical or artistic creations which give us only shadows or reflexions of things in the second order. There has been some controversy about the reality of the second and third orders. It has

been said, on the one hand, that Plato does not deny their reality, and, on the other hand, some critics have put forward the ingenious suggestion that the poetical world, the world of shadows, reflexions and dreams, is a world of intuitions to which the opposition of truth and falsehood is inapplicable because it represents a stage of mental activity more primitive than that to which such conceptions have reference. But these discussions become meaningless in face of Plato's unambiguous assertion that mundane existence is only a shadow or an imitation of the world of Forms and that the poet's work, being an imitation of this imitation, is at three removes from what is 'truly real'. Poets cannot give any picture of truth because they are not knowledgeable people. Homer sang about fighting and law-making but he was ignorant of both these arts.

The charge of ignorance can be easily disposed of, for if Homer could not fight like Achilles or make laws like Lycurgus, neither could Achilles and Lycurgus write poetry like Homer.* But the other charge — that poetry can have no insight into truth — is more serious and deserves careful scrutiny. It may be that we who have our Bibles and other theological writings do not, unlike ancient Athenians, look for religious instruction

* It is possible that in Plato's time enthusiasts made absurd claims that poets were masters of practical knowledge, but in our days Plato's indictment about the poet's lack of knowledge seems to involve the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi*, because no one now would suggest that poetry or drama would be a reliable guide to the acquisition of technical craftsmanship.

in poetry; but are we to regard poetry as incapable of seeing the truth? Is poetry only an imitation and does it imitate what is outward and partial, the world of men and things as they appear on the plane of physical existence? In the *Phaedrus*, Plato recognizes the inspiration of poetry as a kind of divine madness, but he gives the poet an inferior status in the hierarchy of seers. In his opinion, 'the soul which has seen most of truth shall come to the birth as a philosopher, or artist, or some musical and loving nature; that which has seen truth in the second degree shall be some righteous king or chief; the soul which is of the third class shall be a politician, or economist, or trader; the fourth shall be a lover of gymnastic toils, or a physician; the fifth shall lead the life of a prophet or a hierophant; to the sixth the character of a poet or some other imitative artist will be assigned . . . . .' It is to be noted that Plato regards the philosopher as the supreme artist and rates the poet only higher than the artisan, the demagogue, or the sophist; the reason why he puts the poet so far down in the list is that poetry cannot get behind appearances and know reality as it is. It is because of this pre-occupation with surfaces that poets cannot understand universals; they cannot pass from the many particulars of sense to 'one conception of sense'. 'Your lovers of sights and sounds,' says he in the *Republic*, 'delight in beautiful tones and colours and shapes and in all the works of art into which these enter; but they have not the power of thought to behold and to take delight in the nature of Beauty itself.'[5]

Poesis is a theoretical activity, one out of many forms of knowing which Plato analyses by means of the symbol of the Line and of the Cave. Although there has been a good deal of controversy about the exact significance of these, the main outline seems to be clear. Confining ourselves to the Line, we find that it is divided into two sections, the visible and the intelligible, which are further cut into two, the four sections corresponding to four states or stages in the apprehension of reality. There is the lowest form of cognition known as *eikasia* or conjecture and imagining. This is taken up with shadows, reflexions and dreams, and is the world of poetry, painting and sculpture, indeed of all the fine arts except music. A higher stage is reached when the mind deals with the actual things of life, the things which we see around us and of which the objects in the first section are resemblances. From the visible world the mind travels to the world of intelligence, and here, too, we find that there are two sections — one of mathematical thinking, in which the soul uses the figures given by the visible world, and the other of dialectical knowledge in which reason alone is called into activity. The difference between these two sections of the intelligible world has to be carefully noted. Mathematical thinking is intellectual, but it always starts from things in the visible world and instead of going higher, it returns to the visible world in which its theorems are applied. The mathematical sciences begin by assuming certain hypotheses — such as odd and even numbers, or the various figures and the three kinds of

angle — and then instead of travelling upwards to a principle, go down to a conclusion. The principal quality of these sciences is self-consistency rather than truth. The highest form of knowledge is dialectical; it may start with hypotheses, but these it treats not as first principles but as a flight of steps up which it may mount all the way to something which is not hypothetical but is the first principle of all. Dialectical knowledge thus differs from mathematical thinking in two important ways: it examines the basis of assumptions and hypotheses until it arrives at first principles, and it does not employ images of the visible world.

The famous allegory of the Cave, too, is intended to elaborate Plato's theory about the progress of the mind from unenlightenment to knowledge. We have first of all to imagine the Cave in which the prisoners can look at nothing but the shadows of puppets (and may be of themselves) cast on a parapet by unseen fires from behind. Above the fire and the Cave is the world of sunlight. Stripped of allegory, Plato's meaning is that if we cannot see anything else, we are bound to take shadows and reflexions of images and the dreams and illusions of poetry as alone real, just as a cinema enthusiast may mistake the sensationalism of films for real life. If, however, the prisoners are released from this bondage, they may see the firelight and the objects whose shadows were cast, and after a painful process of adjustment, know that these are the originals of which the figures on the parapet were the shadows. This is the state of man in what we

call the actual world. Later on by a similar process of release and adjustment, they will come to know that the sun is the source of light and thus they will be able to see things in their proper perspective. The sun stands for the world of Forms, especially of the Form of Goodness which illuminates all other Forms. But even here there are two stages. At first, the released prisoners will not be able to stand the sight of animals and plants and the sunlight and will have to be content with a sight of their reflexions in water. This is the state of mind in mathematical thinking, but when they have passed this stage they will be able to behold realities and realize that the sun produces everything in the visible world including the fire that gave light in the Cave.*

III

Some critics think that Plato's condemnation relates only to representational poetry and that he is willing to permit poetry that is not image-making. There is very little point in such criticism, because, fundamentally, there can be no poetry that is not representational; if

* The interpretation of the allegory of the Cave is beset with special difficulties. There are some critics who suppose that six stages of cognition are described while others think that there are only four. There are, again, critics who hold that the shadows on the parapet which the prisoners take for reality are visible things, the objects of *pistis* or belief. In the summary given above, only four stages have been recognized, and since Plato explicitly states that the prisoners take as real nothing but the shadows of artificial objects (VII 514), their mental condition is best described as *eikasia* (conjectured imagining).

Plato tolerates poetry, it is only such poems as sing the praises of gods and heroes, i.e. poems which represent them as noble. This exception only proves the rule that poets as poets would have no status in his Republic. He himself admits that the poetry that will be tolerated is austere rather than attractive; the poetry that is allowed will be valuable only as a means to a narrow, practical end. 'For our own benefit,' says he, 'we shall employ the poets and story-tellers of the more austere and less attractive type, who will reproduce only the manner of a person of high character and, in the substance of their discourse, conform to those rules we laid down when we began the education of our warriors.'[6]

Plato's objection to poetry is partly metaphysical and partly axiological. A poet is an image-maker whose images are phantoms far removed from reality, and his appeal is not to reason, which is the highest part of the soul, but to emotions which occupy an inferior place there. In other words, poetry gives a semblance of a semblance and enervates us by fostering the growth of passions and by enlarging our sympathy for the feelings of others. These are the special defects of dramatic poetry, but they are to be found in all poetry, for all poetry produces a sense of kinship or sympathy. An examination of these charges must be prefaced by an inquiry into what is meant by 'truly real' and what exactly 'imitation' stands for. The starting-point of our discussion should be the world of actuality, the world of men and animals and nature and manufactured articles, the

world, in short, of things which may be said to exist independently of the mind which takes cognizance of them. Plato never looks upon these as ultimately real, but poetry, especially dramatic poetry, only represents what men do and how they fare, with the consequences which they regard as happy or unpleasant. In such experiences, man has never an undivided mind, and both dramatic and all other poets think that men swayed by conflicting emotions will be easier to represent and more attractive than those with a steadfast disposition. That is to say, poetry draws images of things that are not truly real, and even in this world of pseudo-realities, it chooses those that are morally degrading.

Plato is a realist for whom Forms or Ideas alone have absolute existence. They are immutable and timeless, and differ in this respect from visible things and invisible impulses and instincts, both of which are transitory. They are universals as distinguished from the many particulars of sense which 'imitate' them, and are thus essences in which individuals can only participate. In the world of sensuous experience, we deal with particular objects, but our acquaintance with them can never be called knowledge, for there can be no knowledge of sensible things, which are mere imitations of Forms. At a still lower level stand the poet and the painter who draw images of sensible things, their representations being only imitations of imitations.

The important question is: What is meant by 'imitation', which is the keyword in Plato's theory of

art and occurs, in one form or other, so frequently in all writings on the subject? By images Plato means, first, shadows, and then reflexions in water or in close-grained, polished surfaces and everything of that kind. But such images — shadows or reflexions — have no life of their own, and they belong to a plane of reality different from that of the original. Yet another kind of imitation is found in copying, emulation or mimicry, in which the imitation and the original belong to the same plane; one table may, for example, be an exact copy of another. But even here emulation or mimicry is fundamentally different from copying, and this difference will best be perceived if the imitator is a person of genius, for then the imitation will be more vivid than the original. This leads to a third type of imitation whose other name is symbolization, which means embodying the essence of a thing, though the embodiment is on a plane different from that of the original. The things of actual life are, in this sense, symbols of Forms or Ideas, but they are imperfect symbols because they are so full of individual peculiarities or because their capacities are so limited that the essential nature of Forms is only dimly visible in them. The artist has the power of penetrating to the heart of reality and giving it an ideal but living shape. The simplest example is a caricature, which is at the same time like an actual person and also unlike him. The great cartoonist seizes what he considers the essential qualities of his subject and endows it with a form which is full of obliquity but also full of life. The test of his achieve-

ment is that his portrait, though admittedly distorted, expresses a universal idea that is only dimly visible in the original. The characters of a work of art are drawn from the visible world, but they are — at their own level of imaginative apprehension — brighter and clearer than living man. C. H. Herford points out that in all the spontaneous and seemingly arbitrary movement of the poet's mind among its crowding ideal shapes, reality through his stored-up experience is at work, quietly weaving a thousand subtle filiations between the poem and the life of men at large. Cinthio's poor novel is nearer to actuality than *Othello*, but the latter is penetrated with the vision of life of which Cinthio's tale caught only a feeble and fugitive glimpse.[7]

Let us now examine artistic activity along lines laid down by Plato. An image or a reflexion is a semblance from a particular point of view. So is artistic representation, for art portrays life from the artist's peculiar angle of vision, life as it is seen by the artist. But there the similarity ends. Art is a law to itself; its principal characteristics are intensity, complexity and vividness, and nothing can be further from the truth than to place such living symbols in the same category as the lifeless images cast on water or on a mirror of polished surface. The true poet is no illusionist, neither does he echo conventional ideas in order to please the ignorant multitude. He has his own values, his *Weltanschauung*, and that is why his vision is larger and intenser than the life he sees around him. Plato partly recognizes this when in the *Republic*

(V. 472) he admits the possibility of a painter drawing an ideally beautiful figure complete to the last touch and more beautiful than any person he has known as existing. Should we say that this ideally beautiful figure, complete to the last touch, is a shadow of known beautiful persons, or not rather say that this figure has a human appeal because known beautiful persons resemble it? Here, indeed, we come to the heart of the matter. Hamlet is not an imitation of men in actual life, for our uncles do not murder our fathers nor do our mothers marry our uncles. But those of us who can enter into the drama feel that we are like Hamlet, because we share his indecision and his sudden spurts of energy and also his pessimism and his faith in the noble piece of work called man. Taking one of the most famous examples of representational art, we may say that although Leonardo da Vinci adopted Lady Lisa as his model, the greatness of his painting depends not so much on its likeness or approximation to this lady whom only her contemporaries saw, as on the fact that all women, in so far as they are viewed by men, have her inscrutability and her charm.

How, it may be asked, is the world of art related to reality or the world of Forms described by Plato? The first characteristic of Forms is that they are immutable. Beauty is One, Justice is One. These Forms are universal because particulars participate in them, but they transcend the limitations of particulars by remaining unchangeably the same, whereas particulars are perpetually coming into and passing out of existence. Yet another reason

why the Forms are universal is that in them there is the single essential nature of a thing rather than semblances or accidental accretions. It may be claimed that art and poetry have all these features of Forms — their quintessentiality, individuality, universality and permanence. Art is a vision which is unique, and timeless because it is not susceptible of change. The physical embodiment — the statue or the painting — may be destroyed, but the artist's vision endures. Different persons in different places and times may react to Homer in different ways, but the Homeric world defies decay. Othello's jealousy is his own, and one reason why the portrait is successful as art is that it is not possible to conceive of another man exactly like Othello, but the millions of readers who have appreciated or will appreciate Shakespeare's workmanship enter Othello's world and participate in his jealousy. The world of art is a world of essences, because the artist looks at life and by suitable omissions, additions and alterations gives portraits of essences and thus resolves the contradiction between the universal and the particular. The witches in *Macbeth* are women with beards and thus belong to the region of centaurs, chimeras and griffins, i.e., they are imaginary creatures without any prototype in the visible world. But they help to bring out the essential quality of ambition as embodied in Macbeth, and though themselves creatures of the air, are constituent elements in a world that is 'truly real'.

Although in some respects the world of art seems to be the same as the world of Forms, in some others it is

radically different. Art expresses emotions, but the Forms are intelligible only through reason, and one reason why Plato wants to banish poets, especially dramatic poets, from his Republic is that their works arouse excessive emotions which overpower reason. The reason glorified by Plato not only keeps emotions under control but is also completely unaided by sensuous images. Dialectical reason, which, according to him, is the highest intellectual faculty of man, proceeds a step beyond mathematical reason, for although mathematical reason deals in universals, such as *the* Square, *the* Diagonal, it has to make use of particular diagrams and is thus tied to the world of visible things. Dialectical reason never makes use of any sensible objects and moves in a world of intangible essences. The poet's or the artist's imagination, however, is embedded in visible, concrete images which seem to be drawn from actual things of the world and which for Plato have no independent existence of their own. This is his principal charge against poetry and painting. He complains that the painter of a bed has no knowledge of the reality that exists in the nature of things and only represents the appearance of a bed as it looks, his ultimate aim being only to produce an illusion of a bed and not to catch hold of its essence.

It may readily be granted once again that the sensible images of art — of painting, sculpture and poetry — are no guide to the acquisition of technical knowledge and he who goes to Homer to learn the craft of fighting or medicine will be on the wrong tack. But the world of

spirit is different from the world of craft. What the artist of the bed can give is not any knowledge of the making of a bed but of its form, of what in the *Philebus* Plato recognizes as beauty absolute and not relative. Neither is it true that art aims at producing an illusion of life; not unoften it employs distortion as a means of seizing the vital principle that is behind appearances. Indeed, it may be claimed that art is the only instrument by means of which it is possible to come nearest to absolute reality or the invisible world of Forms. Although Plato has defined and described dialectical reasoning, he has not been able to show clearly what dialectical reason is like, what, for example, justice or goodness is when it is contemplated in absolute isolation from sensible images. Since dialectics is one degree higher than mathematical reason, we may compare the latter with the poetical imagination and see which of these — imagination or reason — can give a larger view of life. The simplest form of mathematical reasoning is: $1+1=2$, and the simplest form of poetical activity, according to Croce, is a sighing lyric.[8] If we compare the mental processes in the two activities, we find that in the former all the individual aspects of two things have been screened off to enable them to be counted as numbers. If now we examine a sighing lyric like Shelley's *I arise from dreams of thee*, we find that although the poet expresses here only one single mood, his whole soul is concentrated in it, and this sense of richness and centrality is the result of intensely felt emotion. This particular mood seems

to attract and absorb everything else in the poet's mind with the result that we get an impression of intensity and breadth, which reason, mathematical or dialectical, can never impart. Plato's argument that poetry, especially dramatic poetry, fosters the growth of passions was answered by his pupil Aristotle who held that tragic poetry effects a *katharsis* of pity and fear, and brings about calm of mind, all passion spent.* It cannot be denied that poetry and the arts do appeal — and appeal primarily — to our emotions, but that is no reason why we should go further and say that they produce illusions which should be corrected by reason as optical illusions are corrected by measurement and calculation. The argument that the emotional part of the soul is 'inferior' to the rational is only an opinion which can neither be proved nor controverted. Our emotions and impulses are as much a part of our life as thinking and intelligence, and a purely dialectical or geometrical view of life may be as much an illusion as imaginative apprehension.

Nor is Plato right when he thinks that the poetic imagination is unaided by 'the calculating or the reasoning element in the soul'. Our emotions and impulses are spasmodic and tumultuous, they seize us in a paroxysm and leave us after a violent explosion in the form of sudden action, or frenzied broken utterance. That is

* Although Aristotle does not mention Plato by name, there is little doubt that he has Plato in view when he enunciates his doctrine of *katharsis*. All poetry must, on this view, effect a *katharsis* of the emotions it arouses.

not the way in which the poetic imagination works. It creates a new world of contemplation, surveys an emotion from a distance and relates it to various other things. In Shelley's lyric, the impulse of mating is connected with natural sights and sounds and is also involved in puzzled questioning about a spirit guiding his destiny. The steadfast control of reason is insistently felt in Wordsworth's Immortality Ode, but what is more relevant to the present discussion is that it is not absent even from a simple lyric like *The Rainbow*:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:

where the poet makes this elementary experience the bond of unity between the different stages of his life and also the foundation of his faith in natural piety. One objection Plato brings forward against dramatic poetry is that it encourages internal conflict and that a man cannot rise from his experience of a drama with an undivided mind. What he fails to note is that behind all dramatic conflicts and contradictions there is the dramatist's central purpose which is not unaided by reason and that drama produces an emphatic sense of unity extorted out of variety and complexity.

It is now necessary to examine Plato's other objection, that the imagination conjures up sensible images or appearances which are at three removes from Forms which are apprehensible only through intelligence without the aid of semblances. There can, according to Plato, be no *knowledge* of sensible things, and when, by

an upward movement, we make progress from the visible world to the intelligible, it seems that a veil has been lifted, and what we now grasp are not images but realities. But it seems that even in Plato there are clues by means of which we can arrive at a just appreciation of art and its relation to truth. In the *Phaedrus* (as was said on p. 8) he describes poetic inspiration as a kind of divine madness which awakens lyrical and other numbers and adorns the myriad actions of ancient heroes for the instruction of posterity. The mad poet can see things which are beyond the ken of a sane man. There is, in this passage, a note of irony which, as A. E. Taylor points out, we should neither forget nor exaggerate.[9] Plato mentions another kind of madness, that of the lover, which may give us the clue we want. The lover, when he sees beauty on earth, is transported with the recollection of true Beauty; if he has been corrupted or if long stay on earth has effaced his heavenly memories, he will be overpowered by irrational desire and wallow in sensuality. But the soul that is relatively pure will be filled with a kind of mystical awe at the sight of terrestrial beauty which would recall to him the vision of celestial beauty. This shows that there is a difference between Beauty and the other Forms or Ideas. The Forms are colourless, shapeless, intangible essences, and although we do see on earth specimens of Justice, Temperance or any of the other Forms, the earthly specimens can give only faint glimpses of their heavenly prototypes. But Beauty is different; although she shines in company with

celestial Forms, she may be found on earth, too, 'shining in clearness through the clearest aperture of sense. For sight is the most piercing of our bodily senses; though not by that is wisdom seen; her loveliness would have been transporting if there had been a visible image of her, and the other ideas, if they had visible counterparts, would have been equally lovely. But this is the privilege of beauty, that being the loveliest, she is also the most palpable to sight.' Why the lover is not also a poet of love is a question which need not detain us now. What is significant is that Beauty is not as shapeless and intangible as the other essences. If we transfer what Plato says about the fourth kind of madness (love) to the third (inspiration of the Muses), we find that for the man with the gift of imagination, visible sensible appearances are not mere shadows but symbols of absolute Beauty. Beauty does not merely cast a shadow but is herself 'palpable to sight'. If now we relate what Plato says about Beauty in the *Phaedrus* to his enunciation of the Form of Goodness in the *Republic*, we can realize the connexion between art and truth or morality. The Forms are all irradiated by the Good which is like the sun. It is the Good which, says Plato, makes reality real, and if that is so, it must also make beauty beautiful. Or, in other words, we may say that the Forms are akin to one another, all being expressions of the Good. But on earth they are palpable to sight only in the shape of Beauty; it is, therefore, the poetic imagination which, calling up images, can also behold in them realities. It is impossible for man

to reach absolute Truth, because it is only faintly visible in earthly specimens, but we may say with A. C. Bradley that 'wherever the imagination is satisfied, there, if we had a knowledge we have not, we should discover no idle fancy but the image of truth'.[10]

It is generally agreed that behind the world of sensible appearances, there is the deep sea of Being which cannot be measured by the yard-stick of empirical experience. As Virginia Woolf puts it. '. . . . . our apparitions, the things you know us by, are simply childish. Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading; it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by'.[11] Reason lacks neither certainty nor clearness, but it is doubtful if it can penetrate the depths of the world of emotions and impulses, for this world is only dimly, if at all, irradiated by reason. Rather may we say that it is the poetic imagination — which does not abjure sensible appearances, which is aided by reason and which is sympathetic to blind impulses — that can alone grasp 'the nature of each thing as it is in itself'.*

If the above argument is accepted, it will be easy to see that the worlds of *episteme* (knowledge) or *noesis* (intellect) and *eikasia* (conjecture) are not as far from each other as Plato is inclined to believe, and it is not without

* 'What distinguishes poetic from religious or philosophical apprehension is not that it turns away from reality, but that it lies open to and eager in watch for reality at doors and windows which with them are barred or blind.' (Herford)

significance that the geatest exponent of dialectical reason should constantly express himself through sensible symbols, allegories and myths. It is undeniable that the poet envisages a world of immaterial substances, that the characters created by a novelist or a dramatic poet have not the solidity of earthly objects, that history and biography become art only when the men and women portrayed there acquire a new imaginal existence distinct from their existence in scientific history or biography; but artistic creations are different from shadows, reflexions, illusions and dreams, because the artist's imagination has endowed them with truth and reality. It is not merely that the poet gives his fancy-pictures a certain value, but these pictures also carry with them the best assurance of truth we can have on earth. It is in this sense among others that we should interpret Keats's famous lines:

> 'Beauty is truth, truth Beauty', — *that is all*
> *Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*

CHAPTER II

Coleridge

I

WHOEVER tries to analyse and appraise Coleridge's critical writings will have to face some initial difficulties. There is first of all the problem how far he was original in his thinking and how far indebted to others for his opinions. This problem, however, we may leave out of consideration here, for it is the theory of imagination propounded by Coleridge and not the extent of his borrowings with which we are concerned. A second important problem is that of Coleridge's consistency, which cannot be so summarily disposed of. Coleridge started his philosophical thinking as an adherent of David Hartley's doctrine of association and even named his first son after Hartley. But later on he rejected this doctrine as smacking of mechanism, and became an idealist under the influence of Kant, Fichte and Schelling. Still later, even the idealists ceased to retain their hold on him, and about Schelling, from whom he had borrowed so largely, he made the disparaging comment: 'The more I reflect, the more I am convinced of the gross materialism of the whole system.' It seems that with advancing years Coleridge inclined more and more towards a spiritualistic view of the universe and became a theologian rather than a metaphysical idealist. But he

never wholly abjured his idealistic creed, and what is more strange, to the last his critical theories bore traces of associationist influence.[1] There are critics like Leslie Stephen[2] who think that a system cannot be constructed out of Coleridge's scattered utterances, but others do not agree, and Muirhead has even tried to present Coleridge as a philosopher. Leaving his metaphysics and theology out of consideration for the present, we may say that Coleridge's opinions on aesthetics form an organic whole, and the contradictions are inconsiderable when compared with the emphatic affirmation of a single and compact theory. There can be little doubt that a consistent system of aesthetics emerges out of the large mass of his writings — books, essays, lectures, letters and fragmentary compositions.

A more thorny subject is the relation of Coleridge's philosophical speculations to his literary criticism. Even if we leave out of account a critic like Quiller-Couch, who thinks that Coleridge emerged from Germany with all his other faculties improved and at their height, but a poet lost,[3] we have to take note of those who hold that he was a dabbler in metaphysics and that his philosophical speculations have little to do with his literary criticism. On this view, if Coleridge's criticisms on Shakespeare and other poets are valuable, they are so in spite of his dalliance with philosophy, and not because of it. T. M. Raysor, for example, calls Coleridge 'a philosopher in the lay sense of the word', adding that 'he was unfortunately derivative, mediocre, and, in a

subject which requires system, fragmentary', and that 'he cannot be said to succeed in his occasional violent efforts to engraft his metaphysical conceptions upon his criticism'.[4] Coleridge, it may be said, never engrafted his metaphysical conceptions upon his criticism; rather his criticisms sprang out of his metaphysical conceptions as leaves grow on a tree. Adapting Coleridge's words in another context, we may say that every great critic must be implicitly, if not explicitly, a metaphysician. The value of Coleridge's criticism is largely derived from the fact that whereas other critics see only conformity to or deviation from rules, or record their passing fancies, Coleridge explored a seminal principle from which all his criticisms of particular poets may be deduced. Raysor is anxious to show that Coleridge freed Shakespeare criticism from the fetters of neo-classic convention, but could he have effected this emancipation if he had not first realized the limitations of the philosophy of Hobbes, Locke, Descartes and Hartley? He could write illuminatingly of individual poets only because he had a theory of poetry stemming out of his metaphysics.

II

What is this theory of poetry? Coleridge defines a poem 'as that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having *this* object in common with it) it is discriminated

by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*'.[5] In this definition two points of view are emphasized: (*i*) the immediate object of poetry is pleasure, not truth, and (*ii*) this pleasure is obtained as much from the whole as from the parts and as much from the parts as from the whole.

The first point need not detain us long, for not all that excites pleasure is poetical, and Coleridge guards against such misunderstanding by pointing out that the common essence of all the arts 'consists in the pursuit of pleasure, through the medium of beauty'.[6] He agrees with Wordsworth in holding that 'poetry does always imply Passion',[7] and affirms, too, that the Beautiful, 'not originating in the sensations, must belong to the intellect'.[8] Here are three important clarifications of the simple definition with which we started: (*i*) that poetry is written in a mood of excitement; (*ii*) that the pleasure derived from poetry is intellectual pleasure; and (*iii*) that this pleasure is obtained through the medium of beauty.

All these qualities of art and poetry may be included under one principle — that of the union of opposites. Coleridge harks back to the Pythagorean doctrine of harmony and finds beauty in the realization of the One in the many, in the fusion of the manifold. That is why poetry is written in a mood of excitement and yet the pleasure is intellectual pleasure in which excitement must be kept under control, as in Shakespeare in whom the creative power and the intellectual energy wrestle

as in a war embrace. The poet effects a reconciliation of discordant qualities, 'of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement'.[9]

It is here, in this synthesis of opposites that we have the explanation why poetry is usually written in metres and why all metrical compositions have a touch of poetry. The origin of metre Coleridge traces to the balance in the mind effected by that spontaneous effort which strives to hold in check the workings of passion. Here as elsewhere there should be an interpenetration of passion and of will, of impulse and purpose.

Coleridge claims that the poet brings the whole soul of man into activity, and well may he do so. The whole being of man involves a number of incompatibles, e.g. impulse and judgement, passion and will, emotion and intellect: things that are usually at cross-purposes with each other and would, if brought together, thwart and cancel each other; so that, in the non-poetic life, the whole soul of a man being called into activity means chaos. But in the poetic act and experience all such incompatibles are perfectly reconciled in a unity where, far from thwarting each other, they are mutually enriched by their 'interpenetration'. Hence the value and the necessity of art. What cannot be realized in life outside art is perfectly

realized in art — the miracle, for instance, of a progress compatible with retrogression, of a freedom compatible with compulsion, of a more than usual state of emotion compatible with a more than usual order.

III

The reconciliation of opposites which the Imagination effects is a characteristic it shares with the intellect, for, according to Coleridge, not only is the pleasure of poetry an intellectual pleasure but 'the prime object of all reasoning is the reduction of the many to one and the restoration of particulars to that unity, by which alone they can participate in true being on the principle *omne ens unum*'.[10] What, then, is the difference between the imagination and the intellect, between poetry and science? Coleridge suggests that whereas science aims primarily at truth, poetry proposes pleasure as its end. But this is an unsatisfactory distinction, for pleasure may accompany artistic activity but it is not its essence; even if we were to hold that it is so, we should have to define the characteristic quality which distinguishes poetic from other pleasures. Yet another point of difference postulated by Coleridge is that poetry is written in a state of excitement. But this distinction, though helpful, cannot be taken as decisive, for although poetry is written in a state of excitement, a state of excitement alone does not produce poetry.

The distinguishing feature of the imagination is found in the manner in which it reconciles opposites. The

unification effected by the imagination is firm and deep. It is very difficult to explain a mysterious process in commonplace words. But it may be said that the imagination is the modifying, coadunating faculty, which, borrowing a term from medical physiology, we may say *secretes* and *re-secretes* in order to ensure healthful vigour, or (borrowing a word from dyeing) we may call it a *mordaunt* which fixes colours.[11] The point in all these metaphors is that all disparate and opposite things are held fast in a close embrace; it is a concurrence not of component but of constituent parts. The unifying power holds together irreconcilable elements, because it is a vital principle, and we have an organic and not a mechanical fitness. The difference between history and historical drama is that the latter 'takes that part of real history which is the least known and infuses a principle of life and organization into naked facts, and makes them all the framework of an animated whole'. When history becomes an art, as with Gibbon, we have an impression of this animated whole which derives sustenance from the parts. The organic principle is innate; it shapes itself from within and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. This power science and philosophy, with their dependence on mere reason, can never command, because reasoning argues in a chain of causes and effects, and the assumption of this chain of 'consequent reasoning' precludes the possibility of that absolute identity of opposites which esemplasis demands. Although reason does effect a

unification, such unification is more a logical sequence than a synthesis; here causes are shown as equivalent to effects, but they do not *become* effects. That is why reason should acknowledge a higher power or deeper ground than it can itself supply. And this higher power is the Imagination.

Three conclusions follow from the description given by Coleridge of the Imagination. First of all, being the power which gives form, it is greater than the form; or, in other words, is greater than shapeliness, than mere architectonic; it is the glance and the exponent of an indwelling power. Secondly, the unifying power of imagination is immediate and direct whereas the aggregation of reasoning is mediate and indirect. It has the unmechanical simplicity of an instinct. A dramatist builds his plot bit by bit with due observance of the laws of 'consequent reasoning', but the form of the play as a whole is an intuitive vision. The discovery that all the vastness and multiplicity of detail of a great Gothic cathedral are grouped round the central motif of a cross is one kind of experience — primarily an intellectual one; but the imaginative realization of all that vastness and multiplicity as a soaring symbol of spiritual aspirations is a different kind of experience — primarily an intuitive one. Lastly, the intuitive vision can alone seize the distinctiveness of the things it portrays. Life, according to Coleridge, is 'the principle of individuation'.[12] The essence of a thing means, too, its individuality, the inmost principle of the possibility of any thing,

as that particular thing. This, indeed, is the primary characteristic of art, — that it impresses us by the manner in which it has been able to present the uniqueness of its creations, and here, as elsewhere, Shakespeare takes precedence of other artists, though unfortunately Coleridge does not mention it when he summarizes the principal characteristics of Shakespeare's dramas.

The conclusions of reason are general and abstract, but the creations of the imagination are concrete and individual, and yet — such is the unifying power of imagination—they are also universal. Scientific truths are 'absolute': i.e. depersonalized and 'demonstrable'. But poetic and artistic truths are not 'absolute' and 'demonstrable', for they depend for their validity on taste. It will be helpful to our understanding of the imagination if we try to investigate the concept of taste (Sanskrit *rasa*, which may be translated as '*relish*'). We speak of literary taste and feel that a metaphorical use of sight, hearing, smell or touch would be inappropriate in this context. Taste indicates not merely perception, knowing a thing as it is, but perception enriched by personal predilections. 'Taste, therefore, as opposed to vision and sound, will teach us to expect in its metaphorical use a certain reference of any objet to our own being, and not merely a distinct notion of the object as it is in itself or in its independent properties.'[13] This implication of a personal predilection rather than objective knowledge carries with it another suggestion. When we speak of taste — of some degree of liking or dislike — we suggest that this is

immediately felt and has no reference to what has gone before or will come after. This is true of taste in the literal as well as the metaphorical sense. All other activities of the mind are related to a world beyond themselves, but when we say that a man has a taste for venison or poetry, it means that the 'complacency' is immediate and personal and seeks no justification anywhere else. Poetry gives intellectual pleasure, but the intellectual activity involved in the appreciation of poetry is different from other activities of the intellect because, being immediate, it does not proceed from premises to conclusions. The opposition between poetry and science may be stated in terms of taste. We may say that a man has a taste for mathematics and physics, but we cannot say that he is fond of Newton's laws of motion in the same way in which we can say that he is fond of *Paradise Lost*. Newton's laws are objective laws, proved by means of a complex chain of arguments and with reference to external objects; but a man's liking for a poem is a personal affair. He likes it, and there is an end of the matter.

But is a taste for art, indeed, as personal as we sometimes think? In one respect, taste in the literal sense is different from taste in the metaphorical. When I say that I like venison, I mean that it is a purely personal affair and it is a matter of indifference to me whether this taste is shared by others. But that will not hold good of literary taste. When I say that I like *Paradise Lost*, I do not want to enact a law that *Paradise Lost* is to be liked by all,

but I feel — and this feeling is not less strong than intellectual conviction — that it should be so liked. Literary taste, therefore, lies midway between mere personal predilection and scientific thought; it is not merely an intuition but also a conception, because it is mediate and tries to base itself on a character or mark common to several things. In exercising literary taste, whether as writer or reader, 'each man does at the moment so far legislate for all men, as to believe of necessity that he is either right or wrong, and that if it be right for him, it is universally right'.[14] The experience of art and literature is at the same time mediate and immediate, universal and particular, impersonal and personal. It is necessary that the faculty which is responsible for this unique activity should be wider than taste or fancy, which depends on personal predilection or whim, 'which is blended with or modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE'. This higher faculty is the Imagination.[15]

IV

If we are to understand the significance of the Imagination, we must delve deeper into its essence. Coleridge assumes the existence of an objective world which he calls Nature and also a subjective power which he calls Self or Intelligence. Art, which is the expression of the Imagination, 'used collectively for painting, sculpture, architecture and music, is the mediatress between, and

reconciler of, nature and man'. 'As soon as the human mind is intelligibly addressed by an outward image exclusively of articulate speech, so soon does art commence....so that not the thing presented but that which is re-presented by the thing, shall be the source of the pleasure.'[16] In the acquisition of knowledge we may take the objective as the first and then we have to account for the subjective which coalesces with it. Or we may take the subjective as the first, and the problem then is, how there supervenes to it a coincident objective. Art may, therefore, be defined as of a middle quality between a thought and a thing, or the union and reconciliation of that which is nature with that which is exclusively human.

The ultimate principle, therefore, is neither the subject nor the object but a perpetual self-duplication of one and the same power into subject and object, which presuppose each other. They exist as antitheses and yet are intertwined. To this principle Coleridge gives the name of S U M or I AM. Now if it is the ultimate principle of all knowledge, it must be at the basis of ordinary perception as well as of imagination and the difference between the two must be of degree rather than of kind. That is Coleridge's view, and he gives to Perception the name of the primary Imagination which he holds to be 'the living power and prime Agent of all human Perceptions, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'. The secondary Imagination he holds as 'an echo of the former,

coexisting with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead.'[17]

We arrive at the same conclnsion if we approach the problem from the point of view of methed, the unpremeditated and habitual arrangement of parts in relation to the whole. So far as philosophy and the sciences are concerned, the organization of materials may be made in two ways, to which Coleridge gives the names of law and theory. In law the relation of parts to each other and to the whole is determined by a truth originating in the mind and not abstracted and generalized from observation of the parts. This is what we find in astronomy and geometry. What is miraculous is that the material world is found to obey the same laws as had been deduced independently by the reason. In the second relation, which is that of theory, the forms and qualities of the objects themselves suggest a given arrangement of many under one point of view. Here the idea of the whole is not impesed by the mind from without; it is projected by the parts; and this not merely or principally in order to facilitate the remembrance, recollection or communication of the same, but for the purpose of understanding and in most instances of controlling them. In other words,

all theory supposes the general idea of cause and effect.

Between the two stand the fine arts, including poetry. They make use of theory because the effect and position of the parts is always influenced by knowledge and experience of their previous qualities. There is also the predominance of the idea, which is like the staple or starting-post and which originates with the artist himself.[18] But more important than everything else is the vitality of the imagination. The principle of life, as pointed out already, is individuation, the organization of many into one, but this organization must be from within and not an external, mechanical arrangement. The artist's imagination is allied both to 'law'-making and 'theorizing'; but he is an artist primarily because like Pygmalion he can breathe life into his creations. This is why there is a good deal of difference between the additions made by the reason and the synthesis effected by the imagination. The synthesis of art produces a thing which is not merely a combination of parts but an absolutely new entity. Artistic creation differs from Nature not merely quantitatively but also qualitatively. As Sidney points out, Nature's 'world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden'.

Imaginative synthesis is different not merely from the organization of reason but also from the casual assemblages or juxtapositions of Fancy which has no other counterparts to play with but fixities and definites. 'The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory

emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.' The distinction drawn by Coleridge between the Imagination and the Fancy is celebrated, but some have called it 'useless'. In fact, it is a valid distinction, and we can realize the nature of the fusion effected by Imagination if we place it against the systematization of reason on the one hand and the assemblage of Fancy on the other. The best way to understand Fancy is to regard it as pseudo-Imagination. It seems to be the same thing as Imagination but is really different, because it deals with 'fixities' and 'definites' which cannot be 'modified' from within, which remain distinct even when they are made parts of a larger whole, for if they could be thus transformed, they would not be fixities or definites any longer. In Fancy dissimilar images are brought together 'by some one point or more of likeness', but such images have no connexion, *natural or moral*; they are yoked by the poet by means of some accidental coincidence.[19] The distinction between Imagination and Fancy is often difficult to draw in practice, and what appears to be imaginative to one poet or reader may appear to be fanciful to another, but it is not a useless distinction, for it attempts to draw the line between poetry and pseudo-poetry.

Coleridge gives some examples to illustrate the difference between the two faculties, and many critics,

notably I. A. Richards and Basil Willey,[20] have discussed a large number of passages in order to bring out what they regard as a real distinction. Brief reference to a few well-known lines may suffice to show that the two faculties, although not always easy to distinguish, are fundamentally different. Coleridge quotes:

> Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
> A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow,
> Or ivory in an alabaster band;
> So white a friend engirts so white a foe:
> (*Venus and Adonis, 361-4*).

as an example of Fancy, and his insight is unerring. The idea of whiteness engirting whiteness has been emphasized by the images of lily and snow and ivory and alabaster, but there is nothing in the emotion of love as depicted in the poem which suggests this comparison. So the whiteness of lily or alabaster seems to be a 'drapery' and the whole picture indicates 'wild combination' and 'pomp of ornament'.[21] We may compare this image of alabaster with

> Yet I'll not shed her blood,
> Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
> And smooth as monumental alabaster.
> (*Othello, v.ii. 3-5*).

Here the purity of Desdemona's character and Othello's faith in it — as a murderer he considers himself the instru-

ment of Justice — vivify the images of snow and monumental alabaster, and these images, in their turn, reinforce the impression of Desdemona's physical beauty to which Othello retains his sensitiveness, and of her moral beauty about which Othello has been so tragically misled. Shakespeare comes very near a fanciful conceit in the next image where he makes Othello say:

> Put out the light, and then put out the light.

because as the connexion between the light of a lamp and the light of life is not a vital connexion, the two lights remain independent fixities, but in the next few lines in which Othello says:

> If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
> I can again thy former light restore,
> Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
> Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
> I know not where is that Promethean heat
> That can thy light relume,

Shakespeare's imagination takes fire again and the differences between the light of the stars and the light of Desdemona's life are dissolved and dissipated so that the two lights are idealized and unified. The same coalescence we find in the well-known line of *The Merchant of Venice*:

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank

where the tranquillity of a moonlit bank is emphasized

by the comparison with sleep, and the everyday occurrence of sleep, too, gets a trance-like, magical quality by being fused with moonlight, and the whole scene seems to be particularly enchanting when we view it against the stormy background of the Trial scene. Or we may remember Perdita's description of daffodils

> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty.

The use of the verb 'dare' and the comparison with the bird swallow give vividness to the advent of spring from within, and daffodils not only *fascinate* — an unusual sense of 'take' — the winds of March but melt into them (or literally *take* them) and fill Perdita's world with enchantment.

V

It may be claimed that of all writers on aesthetics Coleridge gives the most comprehensive and the most satisfying definition of poetry and art. But his definition suffers from one basic defect which is the cause of much hedging and confusion. This is Coleridge's misconceived notion of the relation of art to life and of imagination to perception. J. Isaacs traces the origin of the term 'esemplastic' to a note in *Anima Poetae* in which Coleridge distinguishes eisenoplasy from fantasy, or the mirrorment,

either 'catoptric' or 'metoptric' — repeating singly, or by transposition[22] — and in the essay on *Poesy or Art*, he says that the artist imitates that which is within the thing and that he must first 'eloign' himself from nature in order to return to her with full effect.[23] But Coleridge also calls Perception the primary Imagination, and for him the secondary Imagination (or the Imagination proper) is an echo of the former, identical with the primary in the kind of its agency and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. From Coleridge's critical discussions, it is quite clear that the Imagination takes us to an intenser and higher world than that of everyday perception, and that is possibly what he means when he speaks of the difference in the *mode* of operation, but that interpretation falls to the ground if we are to take the secondary Imagination as an echo of the primary. The impression produced by poetry is too strong to be described as a mere echo, neither can an echo possess the transforming power which we all think belongs to the Imagination. Coleridge speaks of the Imagination as a shaping, creative power, and yet the reconciliation of opposites which is the chief characteristic of the secondary Imagination is said to be the law of nature, too, and the most important quality that he finds in Shakespeare's dramas is that here the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature.[24]

The proper course is to take the poetic imagination as something unique and basically different from ordinary perception. Coleridge says that the secondary Imagination

dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate....it struggles to idealize and to unify. What is the object to these verbs? If it is the world of rudimentary impressions, which the secondary Imagination dissolves and diffuses in order to recreate, in a manner beyond the capacity of the primary Imagination, then it is different from perception not merely in the mode of its operation but also in the kind of its agency. If, as is more likely and as Basil Willey[25] also thinks, the secondary Imagination dissolves and dissipates the inanimate, cold world of the primary Imagination, then also it must be basically different from ordinary perception. It seems that in his anxiety to show the creative, active power of the mind, Coleridge ascribes to Perception qualities it does not possess and brings confusion into a theory which is otherwise impeccable.

It is because of this confusion that Coleridge makes perplexing statements about the relation of poetry to truth and goodness. Poetry does give pleasure, but its pleasurableness is an effect or an accompaniment rather than a part of its substance. Having assumed pleasurableness as the principal quality of Beauty, Coleridge seems to think that the Good and the Beautiful are unrelated. He does not write of the Absolutely Good, of the Beauty of Virtue and Holiness, and even in the sphere of 'the relatively good', the difference between the two is, in his opinion, fundamental. The Beautiful is as much above the Agreeable as it is beneath the Good, and the reason is that while the Beautiful is concerned only with con-

templation, 'regardless whether it be a fictitious Apollo, or a real Antinous',[26] the Good is always connected with actual conditions and conduct and has meaning only with reference to them. Another point of difference is that 'the Good consists in the congruity of a thing with the laws of the reason and the nature of the will, and in its fitness to determine the latter to actualize the former: and it is always discursive. The Beautiful arises from the perceived harmony of an object, whether sight or sound, with the unborn and constitutive rules of the judgement and imagination: it is always intuitive.'[27]

The relationship between the Good and the Beautiful suggests many interesting problems. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Socrates maintains that a dung-basket is beautiful if it is perfectly suited for its particular use; conversely, a golden shield is ugly.[28] What is good in its particular function is beautiful and what does not serve such a purpose is ugly. But does any one expect the panther to be good because it is beautiful? We do not complain that such useful animals as the ass and the dray-horse do not appear to be beautiful, nor are we sorry to note that the beautiful pearl is the disease of the oyster.

Beauty belongs to the region of contemplation whereas the Good is always to be interpreted with reference to the world of practice. But that does not mean that the two are unconnected. The imagination is a theoretical faculty; it deals with *natura naturans*, the inner essence of nature rather than with external forms. But even in

this world of inner essence, true imagination expresses universal truths rather than make particular statements. 'Shakespeare,' Coleridge says, 'shaped his characters out of the nature within; but we cannot so safely say, out of his own nature as an individual person. No! this latter is itself but a *natura naturata*, an effect, a product, not a power. It was Shakespeare's prerogative to have the universal, which is potentially in each particular, opened out to him, the *homo generalis*, not as an abstraction from observation of a variety of men, but as the substance capable of endless modifications, of which his own personal existence was but one, and to use this one as the eye that beheld the other, and as the tongue that could convey the discovery.'[29] This piece of criticism sums up the truth of art — its combination of the personal and the impersonal, the individual and the universal. Because the imagination is an indwelling and vital power and because it can see the universal in the particular, the impersonal in the personal, its effect is to broaden our sympathy, to widen our outlook and to nourish our capacity for tolerance, and that is why the Beautiful is also the Good. The Good is Beautiful if it is viewed contemplatively as form, as the expression of an indwelling power.

A similar approach will set us right about the relation between poetry or art and truth. It is not a fact that poetry aims at pleasure whereas science pursues truth. Truth is as much the goal of the one as of the other. Only art and science differ in their method of approach, and

the truths they achieve are of different kinds. The truths of science are 'demonstrable'; those of poetry or art are not. Poetical truths depend on taste, scientific truths have nothing to do with personal tastes and have thus a kind of 'absoluteness' which the arts cannot, and never want to, reach. Poetry and the arts achieve absoluteness in another, and possibly a surer, deeper way. They probe to the inner essence, and abjure all external, non-vital manifestations. Poetry is not in the countenance of any science; it is in the heart of all science. Although the imagination makes use of reason as the instrumental faculty, it is itself intuitive. It does not appeal to demonstration, and it is not discursive. The secondary Imagination, which is the Imagination proper, is thus fundamentally different from Perception on which the truths of science are grounded.

CHAPTER III

Pater

I

PATER was opposed to metaphysical speculation about aesthetics and did not like to define beauty. 'To define beauty,' he says in the Preface to *The Renaissance*, 'not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find not its universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics.' But Pater constantly rises from the appreciation of a particular poem or drama or a particular work of art to the enunciation of a general theory of art, and what is more valuable is that he is always anxious to make subtle distinctions between things which the ordinary reader or spectator lumps together; according to him, 'all progress of mind consists for the most part in differentiation, in the resolution of an obscure and complex object into its component aspects'.[1]

Beauty in art is certainly an obscure and complex object, and its component parts are a content which is given and a form that endows it with movement and life. Pater describes the content of art as the mere matter, 'its given incidents or situation', but it embraces also moral and intellectual ideas, 'the element which is addressed to the mere intelligence'.[2]

The form is the sensible analogue, but it is also the informing spirit of a work of art. As mere sensible analogue — paints or marble — it is crude, stiff, hard and coarsely realistic. It is the imagination of the artist that etherealizes and spiritualizes it; form gives individual expression by bringing what is inward to the surface.

Now the question is: Which of these two elements — content or form — constitutes the essence of art? Before entering into a discussion of this problem in the light of Pater's theories, we have to dispose of one minor point occasionally raised by critics. This relates to Pater's consistency. It is sometimes held that Pater outgrew his earlier hedonism and that is why he did not include his essay on *Aesthetic Poetry* in *Appreciations* and suppressed for a time the Conclusion to *The Renaissance*. Such a view, however, is without any foundation. There might have been occasional shiftings of emphasis here and there, but, as will be clear from the discussion that is to follow, Pater never abandoned, in fundamentals, the position taken up in his first essays, and if there are oscillations and contradictions, they are to be found in his early writings as also in those that are considered his maturest productions.

Pater seems to start with the notion of a perfect fusion between content and form. As poetry uses words addressed in the first instance to the pure intelligence and may find a noble and quite legitimate function in the conveyance of moral and philosophical ideas, it is often possible here to distinguish the mere matter from the

form, but such a distinction is artificial, and, artistically, the highest form of poetry is the lyric in which we are least able to detach the matter from the form without a deduction of something from that matter itself. And all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music, because in music alone the distinction between matter and form is completely obliterated. 'Art, then,' says Pater, 'is thus always striving to be independent of the mere intelligence, to become a matter of pure perception, to get rid of its responsibilities to its subject or material; the ideal examples of poetry and painting being those in which the constituent elements are so welded together, that the material or subject no longer strikes the intellect only; nor the form, the eye or the ear only; but form and matter, in their union or identity, present one single effect to the "imaginative reason", that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol.'[3]

Although Pater speaks of the complete fusion of form and content, he is really biased in favour of form and thus minimizes the importance of the content. Even in the passage just quoted, he speaks of the aim of art as striving to be independent of the mere intelligence and to get rid of its responsibilities to the subject or material. This bias becomes more pronounced when he speaks of form as not merely the informing but the artistic spirit; that is to say, what is artistic in art is derived from form rather than from matter. He refers to Botticelli as one of those entire artists who are usually careless about philosophical

theories and says that art does its most sincere and surest work when it is undisturbed by any moral ambition. He defends Euphuism on the ground that such modes or fashions are, at their best, an example of the artistic predominance of form over matter; of the manner of doing it over the thing done.[4] It will not do to say that the defence of a mannerism should not be mistaken for a universal theory, for although Pater recognizes the ethical interest of *Measure for Measure*, he believes that this ethical interest is inseparably connected with the special circumstances of particular persons, 'in accordance with that artistic law which demands the predominance of form everywhere over the mere matter or subject handled'.[5] And although he admits the 'predominance' of an ethical interest, which is reflected in the very title of the play, he seems to suggest that the law of art is that this ethical interest should be subordinated to the manner in which it is presented.

II

The ethical interest, by which Pater means the moral and philosophical content, may be 'predominant' and yet be artistically subordinate to form; this would be possible when, as in *Measure for Measure*, the moral judgements are those of one who sits as a spectator, and knows how the threads in the design hold together under the surface.[6] The philosopher or the moralist is interested in his ideas as ends to be achieved; his propagation of them is only

a means to the achievement of that aim. But for the artist, the end of life is not action but contemplation, Being as distinct from Doing; that is to say, in art means and ends are fused into a unity. 'To treat life in the spirit of art, is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified: to encourage such treatment, the true moral significance of art and poetry.'[7]

Commenting on this famous dictum, T. S. Eliot rather perversely suggests that Pater was at bottom a moralist and that his notion was to find the true moral significance of art and poetry.[8] There would hardly be a more far-fetched interpretation of Pater's intention; what Pater really wants to show is that the significance of art lies not in teaching lessons or enforcing rules or even stimulating us to noble ends, but in withdrawing the thoughts for a while from the machinery of life and fixing them with appropriate emotions on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects.

Pater's insistence on the primacy of form should be related to his philosophy of New Cyrenaicism, the starting-point of which is Heraclitus's doctrine of perpetual flux; it is based on the assumption that nothing, except atoms, is permanent, that

> life is given
> To none in fee, to all in usufruct.
>
> (*Lucretius*)[9]

Popularly understood, Epicureanism is pure hedonism, the philosophy of Lotos-eaters who make pleasure the

end of life. But such a doctrine is very far from Pater's theories about life and art. 'Not pleasure,' says he, 'but fullness of life, and "insight" as conducing to that fullness — energy, variety, and choice of experience, including noble pain and sorrow even, loves such as those in the exquisite old story of Apuleius, sincere and strenuous forms of the moral life, such as Seneca and Epictetus — whatever form of human life, in short, might be heroic, impassioned, ideal: from these the new Cyrenaicism of Marius took its criterion of values.'[10] If the moment alone is real, then the highest form of existence would be to fill it with feeling or thought or sensation until it burns with a hard gemlike flame; it must have the concreteness and vividness of a sensation.

Pater's 'new Cyrenaicism' is to be distinguished not only from Epicureanism, as it is popularly understood, but also from the scientific and poetical account of it given by Lucretius. Lucretius was indifferent to the gods of his day and so was Pater to the theological side of Christianity, and nothing in his life seems to be more incongruous than his (abortive) attempt to take holy orders. If Marius is attracted by early Christianity, it is its spectacular side that primarily appeals to him. He sees in the faces of Christians a beautiful expression of human sorrow assuaged, of tranquillity and peace,[11] and as Bowra points out, 'It is significant that, when Marius is on the verge of conversion, it is not the charity or the mystery of the Christian religion which attracts him but its ritual. To this Pater was certainly drawn, and in this

respect his hero reflects him.'[12] The principal point of affinity between Lucretius and Pater is that Lucretius, too, is a lover of sensation:

> By what test surer than these very senses
> May we distinguish what is false and true?
>
> ★ ★ ★
>
> You will find
> That from the senses first has been produced
> The concept of the true, and that the senses
> Can never be refuted.[13]

Lucretius, however, believes in the rule of reason and for him true piety is to have the power to survey all things with a tranquil mind, whereas Pater, although not blind to the claims of reason, sets as his ideal the achievement of a quickened, multiplied consciousness.

It seems that what repels Pater in Epicureanism is that it springs from a sense of weariness:

> All things are wasting
> Little by little, and passing to the grave
> Tired out by lengthening age and lapse of days.[14]

This is not the attitude of Marius. Although the spectacle of Christian serenity does make its appeal to him, he is inspired more passionately by the vision of the great hope against hope which had arisen upon the aged world.[15] Pater claims that there is nothing jaded or *blasé* in this philosophy; rather its principal characteristic is

a perpetual freshness. Every moment is brief, but every moment is beautiful and fresh. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, the realization of an ideal Now into which all the motives, all the interests and effects, and thousands of thoughts and feelings of a long history, have condensed themselves, and which seems to absorb the past and the future in an intense consciousness of the present, that is the end of life and art.[16] Evil, from this point of view, is that which the eye refuses to see, and it is on this basis that Marius the Cyrenaic considers himself superior to the stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius who has only a philosophical indifference to the brutal amusements from which Marius's eye would instinctively recoil. Marcus Aurelius's indifference is the result of an ethical theory; Marius's repugnance is due to his inability to *see* an ugly sight.[17]

We may look at this flux in the outer world of things and in the inner world of thought from the point of view of a philosopher whose business it is to observe and speculate, or we may realize it intensely in the spirit of an artist or a poet. The limitation of philosophical thinking is that it breeds facile orthodoxy and requires of us the sacrifice of a part of our experience in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves or of what is only conventional and has no claim upon us.[18] But if we try to realize any experience with the utmost intensity of which we are capable not an iota of its splendour or tragedy will escape us nor will it be dwarfed and

twisted to suit any ulterior end. Then we shall have hardly any time to make theories; we shall only see, hear and touch. If our only ideal is to put as many pulsations as we can into the given time, then these pulsations which are packed into the moment can have value only as constituent elements of form because they have been insulated from everything that is outside the moment. Philosophical theories may be of assistance in making us gather up what otherwise we might have passed over, they may themselves be the object of passionate contemplation, but when they have been realized with the utmost intensity, they have the vividness of sensations; what matters is the gemlike flame and not the materials from which it has been derived or the purpose it will serve.

Art, according to Pater, is the result of a harmonious fusion between a personal quality — that which is most inward and peculiar in the artist's moods and manner of apprehension — and a command of the outside of things in which art really begins and ends. But it seems that in laying emphasis on form Pater is less than just to the intellectual content, although that is a part of what is most inward and peculiar in the artist's moods or what we may call his personality. In the essay on Winckelmann, he says that in ideal art the thought does not outstrip or lie beyond the proper range of its sensible embodiment— an opinion to which few will demur. But in course of the same essay he affirms that in producing his works the artist has sunk his intellectual and spiritual ideas in sensuous

form. If by sinking he means fusion, then his views would arouse little opposition, but one would also expect him to say that the sensuous form has no artistic value except as a vehicle of the artist's intellectual and moral ideas. In the essay on *Style* Pater quotes with approval Flaubert's opinion on the relation between beautiful thoughts and beautiful forms:

'There are no beautiful thoughts without beautiful forms, and conversely. As it is impossible to extract from a physical body the qualities which really constitute it — colour, extension, and the like — without reducing it to a hollow abstraction, in a word, without destroying it; just so it is impossible to detach the form from the idea, for the idea only exists by virtue of the form.'

This is unobjectionable, provided that the exponent of style recognizes the truth of the complementary theorem that form, too, exists by virtue of the idea. But Pater does not always acknowledge that the symbol is twin-born with the idea and cannot have any independent existence. Although he protests equally against the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form, he writes of an opposition between romanticism and classicism on the ground that born romanticists start with an original untried *matter*, still in fusion, and that born classicists start with form, and will admit no matter that will not go into well-recognized types in art.[19] But his predisposition in favour of form betrays itself in the essay on Sir Thomas Browne, in which although he does not ignore the significance of

matter he also puts forward the opinion that romantic literature attains, at its best, classical quality, and this leaning is more unequivocal in the essay on Winckelmann where he asserts that by poetry he understands all literary production which attains the power of giving pleasure by its form as distinct from its matter.

III

The famous Conclusion to *The Renaissance* ends with the exhortation: 'Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you, proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.' But is it possible to determine the *quality* of a moment simply by its passionateness without at the same time determining the *quality* of the passions or the ideas associated with the passions?

Pater has his hesitations which he resolves by drawing a line between good art and great art, 'the distinction between great art and good art depending immediately, as regards literature at all events, not on its form, but on the matter. Thackeray's *Esmond*, surely, is greater art than *Vanity Fair*, by the greater dignity of its interests. It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it,

that the greatness of literary art depends, as *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, *Les Misérables*, *The English Bible*, are great art.'[20]

This distinction gives away the case for the predominance of form over matter. Pater argues that a work of art must first of all be good and then it should also be great; it should be devoted further to such noble ends as the increase of men's happiness or the redemption of the oppressed. But artistic experience is a single moment, and its greatness cannot be dissociated from its goodness. If *The Divine Comedy* is great because of its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, these, by the law of absolute fusion, must leave their impress on the form, too, which means that form has not that primacy which Pater and other exponents of style give to it. We should, indeed, be adopting an imperfect standard if we look upon greatness as something additional to goodness. For both 'goodness' and 'greatness' we should substitute the single concept of value, and recognize that the excellence of art depends on the form as well as the content and that the form is directed and guided by the content as surely as it has a controlling influence on the content. It may be urged that the perfection of a work of art lies in the absolute fusion of matter and form and that the moment of the form will vary according to the moment of the matter. An artistic moment, however, is a single unit in which the matter and the form may be distinguishable but are not separable. If that be so, the moment of the matter must interpenetrate and saturate the moment of

the form so that the pleasure of art and poetry will be derived equally from both. A nonsense rhyme has a unique form and so, too, has an Ode of Keats, but the latter is greater because its matter and also its form are larger and more complex. If this is admitted, the distinction Pater draws between good art and great art would fall to the ground. It cannot too often be said that art is both matter and form, and since form is directed by matter and matter derives its vital spark from form, the artistic value of a poem will depend equally on both. If there are some arts which cannot command the wealth of content to be found in poetry, to that extent they will be less valuable.

If once the value of matter is recognized, the autonomy of art has to be interpreted in a limited sense. The imagination bloweth where it listeth; it can invent improbable incidents, create monsters and spirits and chimeras. But all its improbabilities and all its assumptions must, in the last analysis, be judged in terms of life. Art has, therefore, to be valued by standards taken from the outside world, although, paradoxically, it is always breaking those standards and trying to impose norms of its own. In Pater's reflexions on the relation between art and truth there is the same ambivalence that we find in his attitude to content and form. The aim of all true criticism is to see the object as in itself it really is, and in aesthetic criticism the first step to seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly. The aesthetic

critic, then, regards all the objects with which he has to do as powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations. This is the view Pater expresses in the Preface to *The Renaissance* (1873). But in the essay on *Measure for Measure* (1874), he enunciates the doctrine of poetic justice which involves the idea of rights, and at bottom rights are equivalent to that which really is, to facts. Although Pater affirms that reality can be properly apprehended through love and sympathy, thus proposing an emotional rather than a scientific approach to truth, the view of art outlined in the eassay on *Measure for Measure* (and partly in the essay on *Style*) cannot be called a doctrine of pleasurable sensations. If art is to be allied to great ends and to know things as they really are, it has to look forward to something beyond itself, and even when it deals with man as he is not to be, it has its roots in man as he is and as he is to be. When a poet writes nonsense rhymes, he passes, too, a judgement on the pretensions of reason; when he is withdrawn from the world into his inner self, his musings appeal to us because they contrast with the drabness of reality. If the artist had been only a solitary dreamer, his dreams would not have had that tremendous effect on society which they have in fact. Morris called himself the idle singer of an empty day, but no one believed more fervently in the social value of art and worked more enthusiastically to make the useful beautiful.

The 'ostensible subject' (e.g. the skylark for Wordsworth and Shelley or the nightingale for Keats) may be

only the starting-point of a train of ideas and sentiments, and it is possible that artistic activity may consist partly in a suppression or vagueness of the subject if we take the word in this limited sense.[21] But if by the subject we mean ideas and fancies, they are not to be suppressed, but neither are they to gain ascendancy over form. Pater holds that discourse and action show man as he is, more directly than the play of the muscles and the moulding of the flesh: better, in fact, than formal, sensuous properties.[22] But he seems to think that even if 'discourse and action' be the subject of poetry and the arts, the meaning must reach us through emotion — love and sympathy — and through ways not distinctly traceable by the understanding.[23] The place of the understanding in a work of art will be discussed in the next chapter, which will be taken up with an examination of Croce's aesthetic theories. It will be enough to affirm here that in art and poetry content and form inhere in and completely saturate each other and any attempt at giving primacy to one element over another or at drawing a distinction between good art and great art would be confusing and misleading. If it is recognized that the region of art is subject to a peculiar *condominium* in which form and matter are not merely in joint control but also penetrate, regulate, and direct each other, then there can be no objection to accepting Pater's definition that art is the expression of 'the imaginative reason' or 'the imaginative intellect'.

CHAPTER IV

Croce

I

In a sense Croce may be said to be the greatest of those critics who believe in the entire freedom of the creative spirit and its independence of dogma, of historical fact, utility and morality. His arguments and conclusions are more thoroughgoing, more elaborate and, in their theoretical aspects, more consistent than those of any other idealistic thinker.

Croce starts with some fundamental divisions of human activity, the two basic categories being theoretical activity and practical activity. Theoretical activity means the acquisition of knowledge, and although knowledge may inspire the will, it has itself nothing to do with practice. This theoretical activity of knowledge 'has two forms: it is either *intuitive* knowledge or *logical* knowledge; knowledge obtained through the *imagination* or knowledge obtained through the *intellect*; knowledge of the *individual* or knowledge of the *universal*; of *individual things* or of the *relations* between them: it is, in fact, productive of either *images* or of *concepts*.' Corresponding to these two forms of theoretical activity, there are two forms of practical activity and these comprise utility (economic activity) and morality.[1]

It is intuitive knowledge, the subject-matter of poetry

and the arts, which has to be investigated here. Although it guides practice, it is itself an activity of the spirit and therefore ideal, which means that it has nothing to do with the concept of reality and unreality. A work of imagination is neither true nor false, because these categories do not apply to it at all. A work of art is true only in so far as it embodies the intuitions of the artist; that is to say, true only in its ideality. Although all intuitions are intuitions of impressions, and impressions must relate to real life, these relations refer only to practical activity; when the poet's impressions are elaborated into intuitions, they are completely transformed, all traces of their origin are obliterated, and in this sense all art is illusion. Intuition is not perception, for perception always presupposes that its content exists in reality. We can speak of false perceptions but not of false intuitions. Intuitions may be complete or incomplete but never true or false.

It is the feelings about or impressions of things rather than the things themselves which form the content of art and poetry. There is no poetry of things but only of impressions of or sentiments about things, and '*there is no passage* from the qualities of the content to those of the form.'[2] Writing about Shakespeare, Croce says that even if poetry may spring out of contact with the real world, 'the poetical emotion does not lead to the practical, because the relation between the two is not *deterministic*, from effect to cause, but *creative*, from material to form, and therefore incommensurable'.[3] The moment a sentiment is raised to the sphere of poetry, it is plucked

from its roots in the practical world, and it no longer matters whether the sentiment is right or wrong, or what its roots in actual life were. It is for this reason that biographical details, even when they are informative, are irrelevant to the appreciation of poetry.

It is for this reason, too, that poetry or art is neither imitation nor an idealization of nature. Not nature but the poet's impression of nature is the starting-point of the poet's activity. If by imitation any one means representation or intuition of nature rather than mechanical reproduction, then art is, indeed, imitation but in that case equally legitimately it is also idealization. According to Croce, the poet 'goes from the impression of external nature to expression, that is to say, his ideal; and from this passes to the natural fact, which he employs as instrument of reproduction of the ideal fact'.[4] It seems that in Croce's view, the poet's impressions and sentiments are formed out of his experiences in general, and then when he wants to express them and make of them ideal facts, he may make use of some events or persons — 'natural facts'—but these latter have no determining influence on his creation; they are instruments rather than controlling agents.

Croce excludes not only the real but — contrary to Aristotle — even the probable from the field of art. If the probable were included, it would exercise a determining, regulating influence on the imagination. But for Croce the imagination is creative and free, and whatever is imaginable—a griffin or a chimera—is also

probable. Being autonomous, the imagination obeys no law except the law of consistency, that is to say, none except its own laws. Ghosts or spirits, if they are admitted into poetry, must be probable not in the sense that they should have verisimilitude, but in the sense that they are coherent artistic creations.[5]

One reason why we make a confusion between the qualities of poetry and the characteristics of nature is found in the unwarranted concept of physical beauty. Natural objects are natural objects; they are neither beautiful nor ugly. What appears to be beautiful to one may not be beautiful to another; the same objects do arouse diverse and even opposed sentiments in different persons, and the expressions of all these sentiments and impressions will be equally beautiful if they are successful as expressions. These impressions and expressions may later on be referred to natural objects and called realistic or unrealistic, but these later discriminations are known only by experience and are, therefore, unrelated to art. Equally empirical is the feeling of pleasure which is aroused by poetry and art. It is an accompaniment to expression but is not itself a part of it. If the production of pleasure were the sole or principal feature of poetry, whatever arouses pleasure in real life would be an artistic activity.

But it may be asked: If expression were the only criterion of artistic beauty, why should not expression 'in a naturalistic sense' be also artistic? A mother's sorrowful exclamation at the death of her child should

be as poetic as the poet's elegy on the subject. But it is not, for the simple reason that artistic expression is creative and spiritual whereas expression in physical life is passive and mechanical. In real life we are always overcome partly or wholly — by our emotions, but in artistic creation the poet is poetical in so far as he can dominate his emotions which are the materials of his art. Empirical considerations, of whatever kind, may apply to the externalization of expression, but never to expression itself.

For Croce, 'the complete process of aesthetic production can be symbolized in four stages, which are: *a*, impressions; *b*, expression or spiritual aesthetic synthesis; *c*, hedonistic accompaniment, or pleasure of the beautiful (aesthetic pleasure); *d*, translation of the aesthetic fact, into physical phenomena (sounds, tones, movements, combinations of lines and colours, etc.)'. The central point, 'the only one that is properly speaking aesthetic and truly real, is in *b*',[6] in the aesthetic fact which is form and nothing but form.

II

The principal characteristics of form are its individuality and concreteness. Its independence of reality and of all considerations of experience has already been referred to. But this independence is a characteristic which it shares with the other kind of theoretical activity, namely, intellectual knowledge. It is now necessary to bring out the

difference between a concept and an intuition, between poetry and philosophy. Although all works of art are embodied in some material form (sounds, paints, marble, words, etc.), their concreteness does not lie in mere materiality. Artistic creation is concrete in the sense that it has qualities adherent to it as opposed to a quality that may be mentally abstracted or withdrawn from a substance. In art one can never think of qualities as distinct and apart from the work as a concrete substance. In other words, it is a thing and cannot represent anything but itself. 'Don Quixote', says Croce, 'is a type, but of what is he a type, save of all Don Quixotes? A type, so to speak, of himself. Certainly he is not a type of abstract concepts, such as the loss of the sense of reality, or of the love of glory. An infinite number of personages can be thought of under these concepts, who are not Don Quixotes.'[7] But the Don Quixote of Cervantes, although he possesses these characteristics which he might share with others, is a unique figure; unique because he is concrete, because his qualities can never be abstracted from him; as soon as such abstraction is made, he ceases to be himself.

This concreteness of art is the concreteness of an ideal creation and not of a physical entity. In the physical world, whenever we are conscious of an object we are conscious of it in space and time. But even here, argues Croce, it is possible to have intuitions in space without time and temporal intuitions without space. What is more important for Croce's thesis is the consideration that

space and time are later constructions added by the intellect to the first fine unreflecting rapture of the spirit. It is this that the poet's imagination captures and expresses, and what counts in poetry and the arts, is pure form, character and individual physiognomy.[8] It is this ideal, this extra-temporal and extra-spatial quality of art which gives it universality. An artistic product has no general character, but it is universal, because, unlike physical perceptions, it is independent of space and time, and is spiritual and ideal.

Intuitive knowledge is of individual things and conceptual knowledge of the relations between them. In actual practice every poet, just because he is a man, has conceptual knowledge which he cannot banish when he is being intuitive. He may have intuitions, but he has intuitions only in relation to the things he knows conceptually. His intuitions are conditioned by the historical time in which he lives, his environment, his character and his intellectual ideas. Although Croce affirms that it is possible to have pure intuitions, as in the impression of a moonlight scene by a painter or the words of a lyric of personal emotion for example, yet he recognizes that a 'sentiment does not appear without a basis of certain mental presumptions or concepts, that is to say, of certain convictions, affirmations, negations and doubt'.[9] But these, in his opinion, have no value in art; they are not even the content of art. These mental presumptions are associated with, or are a stimulus to, certain feelings which, indeed, are the materials that the imagination

elaborates and in the process of elaboration endows with form. The total vision is not of the intellectual concepts, looked at by themselves, but of vitality, and it is the whole that determines the quality of the parts. 'The difference between a scientific work and a work of art, that is between an intellectual fact and an intuitive fact, lies in the difference of the total effect aimed at by their respective authors.'[10] The process of transformation and fusion seems to be gradual, and poetry is indeed, born of emotions recollected in tranquillity. The intellectual concepts seem in the first stage to be merged in the emotions which they are associated with and these emotions which are the materials of art arouse a dominant emotion, which may be called the content of art, and when the dominant emotion with its subsidiaries is elaborated, the concepts lose their conceptual character and become only parts of a vision, the constituents of an image which is a single whole.[11]

What is the quality of this aesthetic intuition? In Croce's opinion, there cannot be any qualitative difference between one aesthetic intuition and another or between an aesthetic intuition and an ordinary intuition. The difference is always one of extension; the aesthetic intuition covers a wider field than the non-aesthetic. There is an 'identity of nature' between the artist of genius and the common man, for without such an identity, the artist's genius would never be understood and appreciated. Croce does not explain what he means by a 'wider field', except to say that the artistic intuition is

more complex than ordinary intuitions. It is clear that a great poem takes a larger number of sentiments or impressions of a larger number of things or a larger number of ideas than are found in an ordinary intuition or a second-rate poem, and — this is another important characteristic of art — these multifarious intuitions are fused into a complex whole. Discrete multiplicity is welded into concrete unity. The difference between *Madame Bovary* or *L' Éducation Sentimentale* and Flaubert's inferior works is that in the greater novels the elements have achieved complete fusion, whereas in his other writings they have not.[12]

An attempt may be made to elucidate Croce's idea through an example not cited by him. An ordinary man has impressions of beautiful bird-song, but his intuition is rudimentary and incomplete. The ordinary poet may elaborate his impression of the song and of little else. But when Wordsworth hears the song of the cuckoo, he imagines a wandering voice, sunshine and flowers, his own school-days and an unsubstantial, fairy place which may be a fit home for the bird. More complex is the harmony of Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, because Keats's mind ranges over a very wide field — hemlock and beechen green, dance and Provencal song, the weariness, the fever and the fret of human life, 'magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn', but these disparate images are held together not by any abstract concept or by anything in the nominal

subject-matter but by a tonality which we may describe as the unity of expression.

The other characteristic of art is its vitality, its lyricism. It expresses a poet's sentiment, *his* attitude, *his* spiritual condition at the time of creation, and as the sentiment is captured and elaborated in its simplicity and ingenuousness before it has been abstracted into a theory or exhausted in practice, it reproduces in its own way the warmth and freshness of life. Even when a poem like Goethe's *Faust* seems to be philosophical, the purely philosophical aspect of it is alien to poetry which in the Easter scene or in Gretchen's story 'snatches and renders again a vital impulse in which the infinite vibrates concretely, in which we therefore discover inexhaustible vistas, and which no concept can ever equal'.[13] It is the essence of life that it vibrates concretely; concepts can never snatch and render a vital impulse, because they achieve generality at the cost of concreteness.

Croce refuses to invest art with any quality except extensity, intuitional unity and vitality. He is opposed to all criticism that concerns itself with technique, with structure, with plot and characterization. He does not find any structural unity in the different scenes of *Faust*, and indeed 'the Faust of the whole poem is little more than a concept of the intellect',[14] and not a part of the poetry of the poem. The structure of *The Divine Comedy* is 'one of the aspects of theological romance, but it is not the formative principle of the poetry adherent to it'. He recognizes only one poetical stream in Shakespeare

and the distinctions between character and actions, or between style and dialogue he rejects as arbitrary, scholastic and rhetorical. He disapproves of technical categories, and for him 'every effort made to convert structural reasons into artistic reasons is a sterile waste of intelligence'.[15] In Croce's opinion, expression (or intuition) is a self-contained activity; that is to say, it does not propose any end and does not, therefore, use any means. If we say that a novelist has discovered a new technique, that technique is a part of the novel itself and cannot be considered independently. The question of using technical means arises only when the artistic intuition is externalized — in words, paints or marble, but then artistic activity has been finished and practical reproduction has started. On these grounds Croce is not prepared to recognize considerations of technique as a branch of aesthetics, and much of what passes for criticism has on this view no aesthetic significance at all.

Nor will he admit into aesthetics such terms as *tragic, comic, sublime, pathetic, moving, ridiculous, tragi-comic, humorous, majestic, serious, noble, idyllic, elegiac, disgusting* etc., the list can be increased at will. He describes them as pseudo-aesthetic concepts because they vary from man to man and from occasion to occasion. So every time any of these words is used, there is a new definition, expressed or understood. They stand for empirical concepts, and like all empirical concepts they are practically useful but incapable of philosophical analysis or definition, and belong properly to psychology, an

empirical science. Croce half humorously suggests that 'the sublime (or comic, tragic, humorous etc.) is *everything* that is or shall be so *called* by those who have employed or shall employ these *words*'.[16] Beauty, in Croce's opinion, is expression, and ugliness consists in not being able to give adequate, effective expression. Aesthetics will recognize only these two categories and none other.

III

Art, according to Croce, is intuition, and intuition is unique. True it is that it makes use of materials, but in so far as it is art, materials are 'indifferent' to it. If by materials or content we mean intellectual concepts, then we may say that art has no content, but if we mean emotionality, then it has, indeed, a content; only the content is a part of form, for form is nothing but emotions expressed. A poem can be expressed in one set of words only; if there were a second set of words equally applicable to it, it would be a concept and not an intuition.

If, therefore, we are to appreciate art, we have to recapture the spirit of the artist, which means that the artist's genius and the critic's taste should be identical. But what can the critic do? Will he respond to a poem by reproducing it word for word? If he does so, he is a mere copyist and neither a judge nor a man of taste.

If he transcribes it in another set of words, he produces a new poem for which the first poem is only a stimulus, the mere content which he has transformed. If instead

of trying to reproduce the poem, he tries to judge it as good or bad, what are the canons he will adopt? Croce has demolished all technical and descriptive categories and denuded an individual work of art and poetry of every quality except its peculiar form which is not open to judgement and is incapable of analysis and reproduction. Thus Croce's point of view seems to reduce itself to absolute nihilism. Just as Plato, himself a great prose-poet, banished poetry from his Republic so also Croce, one of the greatest writers on aesthetics, seems to abolish criticism. No wonder that his own criticism has been condemned as containing not so much criticism of poetry as criticism of criticism.

Form, as presented by Croce, is a colourless, featureless entity which may be put forward as a speculative concept, but is not found in any concrete specimen of art. Although a believer in the autonomy of art, Croce does not subscribe to the theory of art for art's sake as this theory is popularly understood. Art, he admits, is about something; it has a content, but the content is immaterial to it.

Art is independent both of science and the useful and the moral, and its quality does not depend on the content about which the artist has no choice. But it is interesting that all the qualities with which Croce invests art belong to content rather than to form. The intuition of the man of genius differs, according to him, from the ordinary intuition in its extensiveness, in covering 'wider fields', by which he means 'complex states of the soul'. But

states of the soul or sentiments constitute the content of art rather than its form, and once this is admitted, form loses its independence and autonomy.

Art is lyrical, because it expresses a vital impulse. The question is whether the extensiveness and vitality of great art are qualities of form or of content. It will be admitted by most critics that whatever artistic value a work of art possesses belongs to the total product rather than to any constituent element. 'It is in fact impossible,' says Croce, 'to enumerate the merits or to point out what parts of the latter (i.e. perfect works of art) are beautiful, because being a complete fusion they have but one value. Life circulates in the whole organism: it is not withdrawn into the several parts.'[17] What it is necessary to emphasize is that in this 'whole organism' the content is not merely passive material; rather it exercises a determining influence on the form that the perfect work of art assumes. Croce partly recognizes this when he says that it is the matter or the content that distinguishes one intuition from another and that it is matter that makes spiritual activity forsake its abstractness.[18] In describing the sentiments of Ariosto as they are expressed in poetry, Croce says that the first change to manifest itself in them is their loss of autonomy, their submission to a single lord, their becoming instruments rather than ends, their common death for the new life.[19] The new life, it may be readily granted, is the life given by the formative imagination. But if an instrument is manipulated in the interests of an end and is fused into it, it must also influence the quality

of the end, and it is in this sense that we can reconcile the above view with Croce's statement made in another context that art has no end and uses no means.[20] An expressionist might, however, say that works of art differ from one another in quantity rather than in quality and so from his point of view the contention that the quality of the content determines the quality of art is meaningless. But if the distinctiveness of art be only quantitative and if it is agreed that a work of art is a single unit, there would be no difference between one work of art and another in so far as they are works of art. The quality of art remaining constant, there would, from the purely artistic point of view, be no distinction between one poet and another.

IV

The limitations of Croce's theories are reflected also in his criticism of individual writers. As he believes in the primacy of form and denies art all content (if by content is meant concepts) and as he considers biographical and historical details alien to art, it is difficult for him to express his appreciation of poetry, keeping himself within the ambit of his theories. His criticisms may be classified under three heads. Sometimes he contents himself with giving bare summaries of poems and dramas, in which nothing emerges that is critically significant. He seems to be afraid to step out of these summaries into criticism and judgement, because that would lead him ultimately

to the poet's convictions which are conceptual, and his principal aim is to save poetry and the arts for non-intellective intuition. But a summary or a catalogue, whatever its usefulness, is not criticism.

Or he substitutes for criticism question-begging epithets, making use of those pseudo-aesthetic concepts which he rejects in theory. Thus to him Dante's poetry is poetical not only because of the splendid sensible images with which it is everywhere flowered; it is poetical in its own movement, which imprints itself with imaginative clarity upon the details of dilemmas and syllogisms, so that we find dialectic converted into an enjoyable aesthetic spectacle.[21] Shakespeare's comedies 'excel in the weaving of intricate incidents. They are replete with grace and winsomeness, melodious with songs inspired by idyllic themes.'[22] Do we need any comment to appreciate the beauty of Faust's address to the moon and the poetical flight of his quivering sigh for living nature?[23] The form of Ibsen's art is dramatic, because dramatization was spontaneous, natural and necessary to him.[24]

In spite of occasional indulgence in summaries and question-begging epithets, Croce has given us a large quantity of illuminating criticism, and it is the quality of this criticism that enables us to realize the merits as well as the limitations of his theories. Plato rejected poetry as untrue but constantly expressed his philosophical ideas in poetical myths. Here, too, Croce reminds us of Plato, because he banishes concept from poetry but his own criticism is at its best when it can reveal

the philosophical and ethical aspect of his subject. For example, he likes Sir Walter Scott but parts from him with a sense of dissatisfaction, because Scott's characters exist for themselves; they are 'formal' heroes whose creator is uninspired by religious or other passion, by any artistic idea.[25]

J. M. Robertson points out many detailed inconsistencies in Croce's criticism of Shakespeare,[26] but what is more significant is that Croce frequently departs from his own dictum that there is no passage from the qualities of the content to those of form. In his best criticism, whether of Shakespeare or of Dante or of Goethe or of the other writers considered by him, he starts with the glorification of form, then goes on to the sentiment and finally reveals the concepts — ideas of good and evil or of justice or of moral excellence — underlying those sentiments and giving them their appropriate character and physiognomy. He justly rejects the biographical and theological criticism of Dante as alien to poetry but substitutes in its place a new allegory of the *Divina Commedia* in which 'the ethical and the intellectual frame of Dante's thought finds its proper place'.[27] Croce does not seek in *Faust* what other critics have found in it — an answer to the 'question as to the value, or rather the disvalue of human life', but what appeals to him most in the Gretchen tragedy is 'the moral significance she assumes', 'the sincere and high ethical ideal' co-existing with 'poetical inspiration'.[28] Goethe's Iphigenia is not 'an idea or a type', but she is at the same time the 'eternal

feminine', 'the feminine, which is not effeminacy or mere womanliness, but pure morality, which has decisive value in the full affirmation of human liberty'.[29] Helena, like Iphigenia, is a conception of Goethe, a representation of 'Beauty, enchantment, intoxication, perdition'.[30]

It is necessary, in the light of the above examples, to re-examine the relationship between the intellect and the imagination and to discover afresh the place of conceptual thinking in art, for although Croce banishes concepts from art — going so far as to say that if concepts are looked upon as the content of art, art has no content — he is forced, by the necessity of criticism, to delve into the concepts that underlie poetical intuitions. Croce notices two kinds of aesthetic activity in which concepts seem to have a prominent place. In the first, which he rejects as inartistic, the work of art presents a thesis and is only an example of a general concept. One variety of this is found in those works of art in which the beautiful is conceived of as something placed outside the aesthetic activity which an artist realizes in his work.[31] Here the artist seems to pass from the general to the particular, but as the particular is only an illustration of a general law, it has not the concreteness, the individuality or the autonomy that belongs to art.

In the other class of aesthetic concepts, which Croce recognizes as properly belonging to art, there is no passage either from the particular to the general or from the general to the particular, but the 'concepts which are found, mingled and fused with the intuitions, are no longer

concepts, in so far as they are really mingled and fused, for they have lost independence and autonomy. They have been concepts, but have now become simple elements of intuition'.[32] The effort to think generates a passion all by itself and this rational-volitional passion is portrayed in the poetry of Corneille.[33] From this elementary type of the aesthetic concept to the creations of Dante or Shakespeare or Goethe is a far cry, but everywhere the concept must, according to Croce, shed its generality and abstractness and become an 'element' in intuition.

Can the leopard change its spots or the concept its conceptual character? Concepts lose their independence and become elements in intuition, says Croce; but do not the elements which constitute a body also influence its character? If concepts are outside the aesthetic activity, they may rightly be left out of critical investigation, but if they enter into an intuition they are bound to transform it as much as they are transformed by it. Croce assigns an important role to reason in his discussion of Goethe's *Werther*, where he says: 'Compassion; hence it is the work of one who knows, of one who understands, and who, without being Werther, discerns Werther completely, and without raving with him, feels his heart throb with him. This is its charm: the perfect fusion of the directness of feeling and the mediation of reason, the union of the fulness of passion with the transparency of its tumult.'[34]

As Croce does not, in the manner of some other philosophers, differentiate between reason and understanding,

the mediating faculty referred to above must be the same as that which forms concepts. The activity of reason is not, however, confined to giving transparency and clarity to the artist's vision; it is a formative element of the vision itself. Both Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw wrote dramas of love and jealousy, but Shakespeare's *Othello*, a grim tragedy, is very different in form from Shaw's comic skit *How He Lied to Her Husband*. The forms are different because the intuitions are different, but this difference is due largely to the fact that they have divergent notions about the value of love and the genesis of jealousy. Croce holds that poetry is an expression of an attitude, a view of life, but an attitude is as much intellective as it may be intuitional. It is, indeed, true that 'the whole is that which determines the quality of the parts'; but equally is it true that it is the parts which make up and also determine the quality of the whole. Not that the whole is a mere summing-up of the parts; the parts mingle and interact and the whole has a quality, a flavour, which does not belong to the parts if they are looked upon separately. But the parts do not die in order to create the new life; rather the new life draws its vitality from the parts, which, although they may lose their separate 'physiognomy', contribute recognizably to the 'physiognomy' of the whole.

It may be urged that concepts do not enter an intuition; they simply *become* intuitions. In other words, the concepts, transformed into intuitions, totally lose their

conceptual character: they are neither true nor false*, and they are devoid of generality, that is to say, they are no longer applicable to a whole class of objects. Shakespeare may have concepts about love and jealousy, but Othello is an individual person who is different not merely from the husband of Shaw's playlet but also from Leontes and Posthumus, in fact, from every one except himself. This contention is not without some force, because the formative imagination endows every character, every idea with concrete individuality. But the concreteness of an artistic intuition should not blind us to its generality. The difference between the jealous husband of real life and the jealous husband in drama or novel is that the former is only an individual whereas the latter, although an individual, is also a symbol of jealousy.

It is, indeed, true that an infinite number of persons can be thought of under the concepts of loss of sense of reality or love of glory, but equally is it true that not one of these innumerable persons will be able to symbolize

* In Croce's opinion, the distinction between reality and non-reality is alien to the true nature of intuition. Knowledge of reality is based upon the distinction between real images and unreal images, and intuition takes us back to that primitive stage in which this distinction does not exist. 'The child, with its difficulty of distinguishing true from false, history from fable, which are all one to childhood, can furnish us with a very vague, and only remotely approximate idea of this ingenuous state' (*Aesthetic*, p. 4). As the relationship of art to life has been discussed in other contexts (chapters I, II and X), little need be said here beyond asserting that art gives us a more direct and deeper vision of reality than is possible through reason and practical experience. It is only through the ideal symbols of art that we can penetrate to the heart of reality.

these ideas in the manner of Cervantes's hero. Don Quixote is not a type but a symbol in which all men may participate in so far as they have a touch of quixotry. The poetical intuition differs from the ordinary intuition by virtue of what may be called its suggestiveness or power of evocation. The larger and more general its connotation is, the better will it be for art, provided only that the conceptual content is embodied in a concrete individual shape.

Lascelles Abercrombie and R. G. Collingwood have tried to elucidate the relation between intellect and emotion or between art and philosophy along the lines laid down by Croce, and it will be profitable to examine their statements here. Abercrombie thinks that although poetry may contain philosophical ideas, the ideas themselves are of no significance in it. What matters is the emotion attending upon the intellectual endeavour. Writing about Lucretius who is universally recognized as an eminent philosophical poet, he says, '*De Rerum Natura* is not an expression simply of a train of thought, but equally of Lucretius' flaming exultation in the belief that his thought explained the world. And we read the poem not to learn what Lucretius thought, but because he can communicate to us the sublime experience of being made by intellect equal to our destiny.'[35] Such a description of the art and thought of Lucretius does not, however, prove the expressionist thesis. The greatness of Lucretius's poetry is obviously due to man knowing himself the equal of his fate, and the verse would not

be magnificent unless the idea were lofty and grand. Epicureanism, as expounded by Lucretius, may not pass all the tests applied to philosophical and scientific thought, and without imaginative transformation, it would have no value in poetry, but this 'knowing' is intellectual as well as imaginative, and we cannot value the power of thinking without reference to the particular way of thinking or, in other words, the expressional quality of thought cannot be independent of the content.* R. G. Collingwood starts with the theory of art as expression, but he recognizes that the poet converts human experience into poetry not by expurgating it — cutting out the intellectual elements in it and preserving the emotional, and then expressing this residue — but by fusing thought itself into emotion: thinking in a certain way and then expressing how it feels to think in that way. He admits further that apart from the idea of the family, intellectually conceived as a principle of social morality, the tragedy of Lear would not exist. On this view, Dante has fused the Thomistic philosophy and expressed what it feels like to be a Thomist. Shelley, when he made the earth say, 'I spin beneath my pyramid of night,' expressed how it feels like to be a Copernican.[36] Collingwood warns us against looking upon a poet as a merely 'make-believe philosopher', for Dante was perfectly in earnest with his Thomism and Shelley with his Copernicanism. What

*It is worth recalling that Lucretius himself rests his claim to the wreath of the Muses on the greatness of his theme, and on undoing the tight knot of superstition from the minds of men.

it is necessary to remember is that thought fused with emotion is not merely an emotion, that even its value as emotion is to be judged by the intellectual element which has been put into it. The intellectual-emotional content of one poem differs from the intellectual-emotional content of another poem, and from the aesthetic point of view there may be three elements of value in a work of art: (*i*) the quality of the thought, (*ii*) the intensity of the emotion, and (*iii*) the livingness of the symbol through which the intellectual-emotional content is projected. The thought, the emotion and the symbol are found fused together in an individual specimen of art so that critical analysis which dissects and judges cannot recapture them in the state in which they were conceived by the imagination, but each of these three elements contributes to the total aesthetic impression and any attempt to ignore or minimize any one of them is bound to give a misleading view of art.

If poetry is to be judged at least in part by the quality of thought, what, it may be asked, should be the distinction between poetry and philosophy? Collingwood says that both are expressions of thought, but poetry is static and philosophy is dynamic. 'The business of St. Thomas himself,' says he, 'is not to expound Thomism, but to arrive at it; to build up arguments whose purpose is to criticize other philosophical views and by criticizing them to lead himself and his readers towards what he hopes will be a satisfactory one . . . . . For the poet, there is, perhaps, none of this dynamism of

thinking. He finds himself equipped, as it were, with certain ideas, and expresses the way in which it feels to possess them.'[37] This distinction has to be accepted only after a good deal of modification. 'How it feels like to possess (ideas)' must be, if the poet is in earnest, the emotional tension accompanying the possession of ideas. The quality or value of this emotional tension is dependent on the significance of the ideas which are sought to be expressed, though that is not certainly the only determining factor. Nor will it be correct to say that the poet starts equipped with ready-made ideas; the poet is no burglar of other men's brains. Our impression of Dante, Shakespeare or Shelley is not that they have a fixed body of beliefs which they are trying to expound poetically but that they have elusive glimpses of truths which they are trying to explore. In all great works of art, especially in a novel or a drama, we feel that the author is reaching forward to an idea of which he is at first often only dimly aware.

The difference between philosophy and science on the one hand and poetry on the other lies in the vividness of the symbols used and the more philosophy and science can employ living symbols, the nearer they will come to poetry. It is true that a poet does not proceed step by step as a philosopher or a scientist does, but that does not mean that poetry is not dynamic. The force that gives it energy is not an idea but an intellectual-emotional symbol that evolves out of small beginnings into full-grown life. What emerges from a work of art is neither

the story of a person with an idea nor the evolution of an idea for which the person embodying it is only a mask but a living symbol kindled by an intense emotion and projecting an idea.

Croce's translator describes him as a Columbus who has discovered the land of Aesthetics. No critic has, indeed, more powerfully presented the case for art as a spiritual activity, for the ideal truth of art, for its autonomy and independence, and no one has proved more convincingly the fundamental unity of form and content, for of all great critics he has best shown the intimate connexion between the two by pointing out that the expressive activity is not added to impressions, but these latter are formed and elaborated by it, the whole process resembling the re-appearance of water put into a filter. Another great service which Croce has done to criticism is to show the tentative character of all pseudo-aesthetic concepts in which psychological classifications are passed off as aesthetic criticism, of all divisions into literary and aesthetic kinds and of merely technical criticism. But his own criticism is often misleading, because he loads the scales heavily against conceptual thinking, which, as his own practical criticism shows, plays an important part in regulating creative activity. He denies concept its rightful place amongst the materials of art, because he thinks that the true content is not the concept but the feeling or impression attached to it, and then he swerves further away from the right track when he says that concepts, even if they are an element in intuition, are

indifferent to art. Art, in fact, is a complex product in which concepts are transformed by the formative imagination which is also directed and illuminated by them. Croce thinks that there is a passage from intuitions to concepts but none from concepts to intuitions. Mental activity is, in fact, a two-way traffic, and just as there is an expressional side to philosophy, so there is a philosophical side to expression. Croce emphatically asserts that thought cannot exist without speech, but he forgets that speech also cannot exist without thought, and if in the ultimate analysis linguistic and aesthetic are identical, if the philosophy of language and the philosophy of art are the same thing, such a science cannot ignore the importance of meaning of which language is only the expression.*

* The above essay takes very little notice of an important aspect of Croce's aesthetic, his attitude to external communication. As this problem is fully discussed in the chapter on Alexander, any reference to it here would involve unnecessary repetition.

CHAPTER V

The Marxist Approach

I

ENGELS, Marx's collaborator and his greatest disciple claims that Marx made two most important discoveries in the annals of science. The first is his revolutionary concept of world-history, by which Marx showed that history is a succession of movements brought about not by shifts in political ideas but by changes in the methods of production and exchange. Or in other words, 'the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, the ideas on art, and even on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must be explained, instead of *vice-versa*'. Marx's second great discovery, according to Engels, is the final elucidation of the relation between capital and labour, the demonstration of the theory of surplus value.[1]

Although Marx is primarily a revolutionary economist with a practical programme, Marxism is also a comprehensive philosophy that touches on all aspects of human life, including art and literature. Marx was a lover of literature, a voracious reader of poetry and novels, but

he wrote about literature only incidentally. His followers have elaborated a Marxist theory of literature and given a new direction to criticism. Some people think that this is an unwarranted extension of the doctrines of a thinker who wanted only to revolutionize the existing relations of production and exchange and they refer to Marx's own warning that whatever else he might have been, he was not a Marxist. But although Marxists might be a little more rigid in their opinions than their master and although there is a good deal of divergence between one Marxist and another, it cannot be said that they are wrong in elaborating a Marxist creed of literature, because this creed is implicit in Marx's writings and his attitude to life, and although they might be filling out the details and even making extensions here and there, the fundamental principles which are of primary importance to the student of literature are traceable to Marx himself.

Marx calls his philosophy Dialectical Materialism. It is materialism, because it considers matter primary and looks upon man's thinking only as a reflexion, or image of the material world. This basic tenet of Marxism has been proclaimed by all Marxists, and Marx himself gives it classic utterance in a famous passage in the Introduction to *Capital*: 'To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of the "Idea" he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external phenomenal form of "the Idea". With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing

else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.'[2] Lenin argues that the physical world exists independently of the mind, and existed long before the birth of man or human consciousness. And consciousness, which exists in the human body, is only 'the highest product' of matter organized in a particularly complex manner.[3] Non-materialist philosophers believe in the mind's capacity for *a priori* knowledge, in its ability to impose on the experiences of the material world its own forms of thought, which cannot be a gift of matter. This is hotly contested by Marxists who argue that the so-called 'creations and imaginations' of the mind are only the result of a long process of practical experience. Engels points out that the ten fingers on which men learnt to count, are not, certainly, a free creation of the mind, and that 'before it was possible to arrive at the idea of deducing the *form* of a cylinder from the rotation of a rectangle about one of its sides, a number of real rectangles and cylinders, in however imperfect form, must have been examined'.[4]

It cannot be said that the Marxists were the first to claim the primacy of matter; it is implicit in materialism, and materialists of all times have advanced similar arguments. Marx's originality lies in making materialism dialectic, in rescuing it from the ruts of metaphysics and formal logic. Formal logic proceeds from three fundamental laws of thought, namely, the law of Identity, the law of Contradiction and the law of the Excluded Middle: A is A, A cannot be not-A, A must be either B or not-B.

To these three principles dialectical thinking adds a fourth which in part supersedes them. It is the principle of the coincidence of opposites: A is at the same time A and not-A, that is to say, A is constantly evolving itself through the co-operation and conflict of contradictory elements.[5]

Dialectics, as Marxists understand it, is the demonstration of progress through the interpenetration of polar opposites. Everything is and is not, for everything is in a flux in which all polar opposites — positive and negative, cause and effect — interpenetrate and modify each other in order to produce a third thing which again joins the endless procession of coming into being and passing away. (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.*) The old materialism was mechanical; it looked upon things as rigid and fixed; it might be summed up by the phrase, here a cause and there an effect; and for it even change meant mere change of place. Dialectical Materialism puts motion in the heart of things; all rigidity is dissolved, all fixity dissipated, and the whole of nature shown as moving in eternal flux and endless cycles. Motion does not mean mere change of place but transformation — into heat and light, chemical combination and dissociation into life and consciousness. Matter may produce consciousness, but consciousness also reacts on matter and changes it, and man in changing matter changes his own nature, too. It is because of this recognition of the creative side of consciousness that dialectical materialists claim that they differ fundamentally from the older mechanical Ma-

terialism. Not only does Dialectical Materialism supersede polar opposition by surveying life as a continuous process in which things find their place only through interconnexions, but it also weds theory to practice. The chief defect that Marx finds in the old materialism is that it posits reality only in the form of the object; for him the sole criterion of reality is human sensuous activity, practice. It is by this emphasis on human activity that Marx reconciles the old antithesis between subject and object, between idealism and materialism. Men are, indeed, produced by circumstances, but equally is it true that circumstances are made by man. Marx is a revolutionary economist with a practical programme, but his economic programme has its roots in a theoretical philosophy of life. He is a man with a philosophy, but the *Weltanschauung* he propounds is not completed until it is put into practice.

It is easy to see that one of the fascinations of Marxism is that it professes to be a complete philosophy of life. It makes use of abstractions, and indeed, Marx makes it clear that in *Capital* at least, individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests.[6] But Marxism always tries to get beyond abstractions at life in all its concreteness and totality. For the Marxist 'the essence of *all* thought consists in bringing together the elements of consciousness into a unity, and the real unity of the world consists in its materiality'.[7] It is this sense of wholeness in which the

parts are comprehended and assigned their appropriate roles that has led Marxists to look upon Marxism as a comprehensive and fully satisfying philosophy of life. The economic relation is the decisive element, but it does not exclude political, religious, and literary ideas which react on the realm of production and exchange, of which they are the offshoot. Marxists make the further claim that their philosophy gives the correct definition of freedom which consists in a recognition of necessity. Men are free to form their judgement about a particular question, but the content of the judgement is determined in the ultimate analysis by external agencies summed up as necessity. Man recognizes that his movements are controlled by forces, economic and other, lying outside himself, but he realizes, too, that he can shape them to his own needs and purposes, and it is this complex consciousness which constitutes true freedom.[8] Marxism, therefore, envisages a larger life than is attainable in the bourgeois state with its illusory notions of individual freedom; it substitutes for the concept of isolated individuals in 'civil' society the vision of 'socialized humanity'.

II

It is this claim to largeness, to all-comprehensiveness, which for the non-Marxist is the weak spot in Marxism as a philosophy of life. 'The materialist elimination of the "dualism of spirit and body" (i.e. materialist monism) consists,' says Lenin, 'in the assertion that the spirit does

not exist independently of the body, that spirit is secondary, a function of the brain, a reflexion of the external world. The idealist elimination of the "dualism of spirit and body" (i.e. idealist monism) consists in the assertion that the spirit is *not* a function of the body, that, consequently, spirit is primary, that the "environment" and the "self" exist only in an inseparable connexion of one and the same "complexes of elements". Apart from these two diametrically opposed methods of eliminating "the dualism of spirit and body", there can be no third method.....'.[9] It seems that Marxism attempts exactly this third method which Lenin and others would condemn as a form of eclecticism. Marxism proceeds on the assumption that thinking is only a function of the brain and that the content of our thoughts is only a reflexion of the external world. But it credits the mind with a power of modifying and changing the world, of making the circumstances as much as the circumstances make it. A mere image or a reflexion has not this power of changing and modifying that of which it is the reflexion. If it can modify and change, it must have some power which is not inherent in the thing that is modified or changed. If thought is only a function of matter, all its capacities would be functional rather than organic, and any transformation which it effects would be in quantity, not quality. If Marxism rejects the concept of qualitative transformation, it ceases to be dialectical and becomes only a form of the old mechanical materialism, and if it accepts the possibility of qualitative transformation, it

will attribute to the mind powers which are not admissible on a materialist hypothesis.

Although Marxism is a materialist philosophy, it tries to assign an appropriate place to the spirit and in trying to do so seems to involve itself in contradictions. The problem whether matter came first or whether the mind was in existence, although in a very minute form prior to or along with the existence of matter is an insoluble puzzle which need not detain us here. But even if we admit that matter existed prior to the birth of mind, it does not follow, at least science has not been able to prove, that the mind came out of matter, and a philosophy which bases itself on an unproved hypothesis must stand suspect if it calls itself scientific or realistic. 'The indestructibility of motion' says Engels, 'cannot be merely quantitative' and as illustrations of qualitative motion, he refers to heat, electricity, chemical combination, life and finally consciousness. Even if it is assumed that the mind has sprung out of matter, the lumping together of heat and electricity with life and consciousness shows how wrong-headed are Marxist notions of qualitative change. What Engels forgets is that if life and consciousness have any characteristic peculiar to themselves, it is absolutely alien to heat, light and electricity. Indeed, consciousness is so different from physical processes that Bernard Shaw seems very near the truth when he imagines Life as conquering, in course of its ceaseless movement, its enemy — Matter.[10]

It is, indeed, true that life is not known to exist without

matter and that matter is known to exist without a mind, but it does not follow that one of them is only a function of the other. Assuming, once again, that the mind has been created by matter, it must be admitted, too, that the progeny is sharply distinguished from the progenitor. The pearl is said to be the disease of the oyster, but it has lustre and beauty which the oyster has not.

Engels, in course of his arguments against the metaphysical mode of thinking, points out that the concepts of life and death are much more complex than is commonly assumed, that it is 'impossible to determine absolutely the moment of death, for physiology proves that death is not an instantaneous, momentary phenomenon, but a very protracted process'.[11] What he fails to note is that no theory of conservation or transformation of matter or energy can bring back the life that has gone unless one believes in the superstition of metempsychosis or mystically endows the atoms of the dead body with vitality. A similar criticism may be made of the Marxist rejection of *a priorism* and of the Marxist view of freedom and necessity. It is undeniable that the ten fingers on which man learnt to count are not a creation of the mind and that mathematics arrived at the form of a cylinder only after the rotation of many actual rectangles, but the Marxist must also concede that the power to count is not inherent in the fingers and that if the formative imagination were not free it would not be able to rotate the rectangles with a set purpose in view. It would be stupid not to recognize that man is governed by external

necessity and that a knowledge of external laws of nature is not only helpful but obligatory if natural forces are to be made to serve human purposes. But the impulse that urges us to master nature cannot be a gift of nature unless nature is endowed with vitality. Man became a free thinker, as soon as, or even before, he learnt to think.

The contradiction of Marxism or what may be called its 'eclecticism' is most glaringly reflected in its attitude to history. Engels points out that the necessity which throws up the great man is ultimately an economic necessity. That Napoleon, just that particular Corsican, should have been the military dictator whom the French Republic, exhausted by its own war, had rendered necessary, was an accident; but that, if a Napoleon had been lacking another would have been found in his place is proved by the fact that the man has always been found as soon as necessary.[12] But in course of the same letter Engels says — and the passage is quoted both by Croce and Plekhanov[13] — that 'men make their history themselves', that they do so only in given surroundings and 'on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other political and ideological ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones.....' Engels draws attention to the accidental fact of Napoleon being a Corsican, but the really important thing is not so much Napoleon's birth or even the attendant circumstances as his personality which impinged on the course of events and gave it a bias, inexplicable on other grounds. One

need not go so far as to say that history is a collection of the biographies of great men and it may readily be admitted that the great man owes many of his ideas to, and derives many of his methods from, his times. But if it is conceded — as Marxism does concede — that history is made partly by the personality of great men, that contribution cannot be explained by a merely materialist interpretation of history. The great man must be credited with creative power which is an original possession. Once this is granted, the materialistic foundations of Marxism are shattered to dust.

III

The materialist doctrine of literature, briefly stated, is that literature is a reflexion of social reality. Although Marxists have advocated this view with vigour and with their accustomed insistence on economic relations, the theory is not a discovery of theirs. It is to be found in many earlier critics and is most eloquently expressed by Taine who looks upon literature not as a mere play of individual imagination but as the result of the combination of three factors: RACE, SURROUNDINGS, and EPOCH. Taine is frankly mechanistic; 'here as elsewhere,' he says 'we have but a mechanical problem; the total effect is a result, depending entirely on the magnitude and direction of the producing causes,'[14] and although he is a moralist, he traces the 'moral condition' to the race, the *milieu* and the moment. It seems that

genius is a resultant of the three factors mentioned above, and that if these factors could be measured and computed, we might deduce from them, as from a formula, the characteristics of poetry and literature.

When, however, Taine deals with individual writers, Shakespeare, or Milton, or Johnson, he seems to make light of his theory and adopts a method partly intuitive and partly analytical, referring to the race or the epoch only incidentally or when he cannot otherwise explain a literary phenomenon: the wild gaiety in Shakespeare's plays, the obscenity in Pope's satires or the popularity of Johnson's essays and conversation. Being possessed of an emotional turn of mind, and being himself an artist, Taine recreates his impressions in eloquent images or elaborates them with considerable analytical skill. When, as with Johnson, his intuition fails him, he is at a loss and falls back upon his mechanistic theory to explain a popularity he cannot properly gauge. His practice as a critic, therefore, does little to justify the over-simplified theory with which he prefaces his *History of English Literature*.

Marx and Engels never discuss Taine, and Marxist criticism claims to be fundamentally different from the mechanical view adopted by former materialists.[15] In the opinion of Marxists men's ideas on art and literature are, indeed, determined by social forces, and of these, the decisive factor is the economic relation which runs like a red thread through all other relations. These forces — economic and other — are viewed dialectically,

in their opposition and interpenetration and not as 'here cause and there effect'. Literature is not a mystical activity nor is it a symptom of escapism; it is a reflexion of social life in its contradictions and struggles, and of the progress it achieves through them. Indeed, the artist or the poet is not a man living a lonely life on an ivory tower. He is a man among men; the fiction that a painter or a writer or a singer has no part to play in the social struggle is an offshoot of the capitalist organization of society on the basis of division of labour. In a communist society 'there are no painters; at most there are people, who, among other things, also paint'. (Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology*)[16]

The principal contribution of Marxism to literary criticism is an emphasis on the importance of the content. Even if, for the sake of argument, Marx and Engels may admit that consciousness is self-acting, the really important thing for them is that the three moments — the forces of production, the state of society, and consciousness — are continually coming into contradiction with one another (*The German Ideology*),[17] and literature will be realistic only in so far as it can reflect this contradiction. That is why, according to Engels, realistic art or literature 'implies besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances', because it is in the typical alone that these three factors and their dialectical movement may be represented. While demanding vivacity from art, Engels also prescribes that it must have intellectual depth, conscious historical content and

wealth of action, in other words, the content of art, consisting of intellectual ideas and historically probable action, should be not only adequate but also valuable independently of the form. Not only that. 'The literature of a country can be great only when, as in nineteenth-century Norway, the situation corresponds to the conditions of production and is on this account normal.'[18]

It cannot be said that Marxists alone dwell on the content of art, though it is certainly true that they lay the greatest emphasis on its significance. More revolutionary, from the theoretical point of view, is the Marxist concept of form which is said to depend on socio-economic conditions and is looked upon only as an offshoot of the content. If this view is accepted, the sense of beauty cannot be autonomous, neither can it be self-created. In a striking passage, Marx points out that the subjective human sensuousness, which seems to be another name for imagination, comes into being as a result of the existence of man's object, that is to say, of the objective world as realized by man. That is why he wants human senses to be objectivized, by which he means that human senses must be created and developed so that they may correspond to the vast richness of human and natural life.[19] In the *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels echoes the above view and carries it further when he says that the hand that paints or plays on a musical instrument is itself not merely the organ of labour but also the product of labour and its efficiency in the domain of art is a result of prolonged strivings in what may be called the economic sphere.[20]

So far Marxism is quite consistent: Art and literature are the product of social reality in which the economic element is decisive, and what we call the aesthetic sense is not self-created but grows out of man's contact with the objective world. As soon, however, as Dialectical Materialism begins to record its reactions to art and literature, it involves itself in contradictions, because it cannot but feel that art and literature have a life of their own, but if it is to stick to its theories, they should only reflect the contradictions, conflicts, and forward movements in social life. Since Marx regards the aesthetic sense as derivative and developed by man's contact with the outer world which is reflected in art and literature, it is only natural that Marxism should look upon them as appendages to social history or as weapons in propaganda, and Edmund Wilson refers, indeed, to a Marxist critic who prescribes what exactly a Marxist author should write about and what his point of view should be.[21] But Engels, although he emphasizes the importance of the historical and intellectual content of literature, is eager to point out that this should not be developed at the expense of Shakespearian 'vivacity' and that though the principal characters should be representatives of definite historical classes and times, the flow of action should be so spontaneous as to make the argumentative debate more and more unnecessary.

Engels tries to reconcile the contradiction between the propagandist and the non-propagandist trends in his criticism by saying in an oft-quoted letter to Minna

Kautsky that the artist's bias should flow by itself from the situation and action, without particular indications.[22] But this is a tame reconciliation, and the contradiction is far deeper than seems on a superficial view. It has already been pointed out that Engels looks for typical characters and typical circumstances in a realistic novel, but in the letter to Ferdinand Lassalle,[23] which has been referred to on page 103 he says that the intellectual content of the latter's *Sickingen* would not have been harmed if the individual characters had been more sharply differentiated and contrasted; that is to say, if they had been less typical. Does it not suggest that there is something in the formative imagination which is alien to the intellectual content, and which cannot be traced to mere socio-economic factors? For Engels the poetry of Platen cannot be considered a work of genius, because his imagination followed timidly in the bold footsteps of his intellect, because the intellect cannot take the 'daring leap' which genius demands.[24] Stripped of metaphor, what does this daring leap of genius mean? Nothing but this, that the imagination is a self-acting, creative power which controls reason as much as it is controlled by it and that there is an element in consciousness which is not a mere reflexion of the historical content, but such an admission would be a fundamental modification of the starting-point of materialism. The conclusion then becomes inevitable that Dialectical Materialism is only a form of dualism, and thus matter loses the primacy which was originally assigned to it.

Nor is the contradiction resolved if we appeal from Engels to Marx. Speaking at the graveside of Marx, Engels declared that the master's greatest contribution to human civilization was his discovery that mankind must satisfy material needs before it can pursue politics, art, science, religion and that the degree of economic development attained by a given people during a given epoch is the foundation on which ideas on art or even religion have been evolved, and in *Capital* Marx specifically mentions religion as a reflex of the real world.[25] But in course of his analysis of the relationship between conscious production and the laws of Beauty, Marx says that the difference between an animal's activity and human achievements is that the animal produces only to satisfy immediate physical needs whereas man 'freely faces his product', that is to say, man in his creations is independent of mere physical necessities.[26] This is very near the doctrines preached by the 'mystic' Rabindranath Tagore or the 'aesthete' Oscar Wilde. It must be admitted, however, that here Marx adds the materialistic proviso that creation must be in accordance with 'the inherent measure of the object'. But he proceeds a step further in the direction of idealism, when in analysing the difference between the labour of animals and human labour, he says 'that a bee puts to shame many architects in the construction of her dam, but what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he creates it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a

result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only makes a change of form in the material on which he works but he also realizes a purpose of his own...'[27] This looks like saying that the real world, at least, the world of human reality, is a reflexion of the ideal and not vice versa.

It may be argued that the artist's imagination or 'the purpose of his own', to which Marx refers above, is a reflexion of the socio-economic forces which determine his consciousness. If that is so, we only escape one contradiction to fall into another, for this materialistic doctrine cannot explain the emphasis Marx places on style. Marx was a revolutionary, and his objection to the control exercised by governments on the free expression of opinion was based on the ground that the writer's 'property is form', his 'spiritual individuality', and he quotes with approval the dictum that the style is the man, that the 'sun of the spirit' may break into ever so many individuals and objects. If the spirit is, indeed, like the sun and has incalculable possibilities, it will be as idle to think that such possibilities are determined by material forces of production as it will be absurd to expect them to fit into any 'prescribed expression'.[28]

IV

If from the enunciation of theory, we come to the Marxist criticism of individual authors, we find, characteristically enough, excessive emphasis on the content

and its economic implications and a tendency to ignore the creative aspect of poetry, drama and novel. Even if Marx or Engels occasionally refers to the 'vivacity' of a Shakespeare, neither of them stops to enquire what this vivacity is and how it is achieved. No wonder that the literary criticism of the masters as well as of their disciples is often misleading and sometimes absurd. Marxism believes in a congruity between material and artistic products, and it is on this basis, as pointed out above, that Engels explains the literary upsurge in nineteenth century Norway. He notices a similar literary upsurge in Russia but does not stop to consider if the social and historical roots were comparable. But when there is a glaring disproportion between the material basis and the superstructure of art and poetry, Marxism is at a loss, and has recourse to curious explanations. For example, how are we to explain a modern man's appreciation of Greek literature when we know that ancient Athenian society was economically undeveloped, and as Engels points out, the writers had the most unscientific notions about nature? Marx's explanation is that we love Greek literature in the same way in which a grown-up man takes interest in the activities of children, to which he cannot return.[29] But this criticism completely ignores the profundity and richness of Greek art. It is said that Aeschylus was one of the three favourite poets of Marx. If he went to Aeschylus in order only to appreciate the workings of the child-mind, for the majority of readers it would seem to be a most fantastic

reason for reading the great Greek dramatist. Rather they would think that Marx's tastes were better than his theories.

Balzac gives a lurid description of the squalor in nineteenth-century France and that is why, although a royalist and a legitimist, he is the favourite of Marxist writers. Marx loved Balzac and once wanted, indeed, to write a monograph on him. From critical scraps gleaned from Marx's writings, it seems that such a work, if written, would have been little more than an appendix to *Capital*. It is certainly true that Balzac draws a most graphic description of the chicanery, mendacity, hypocrisy and exploitation we find in modern civilization and as modern civilization is capitalistic, it is permissible to draw the conclusion that these evils are evils of capitalism. But Balzac not merely sounded the depths of misery and squalor but also revealed the inner springs of goodness in human character, and the capitalistic critic may draw the conclusion that Père Goriot's love for his daughters was as much a fruit of capitalism as his meanness. What is important from our point of view is that such comments, whether in support of capitalism or against it, are not literary criticism, for they do not help us to understand the genius of Balzac, his command of character and plot.

The present essay is intended to deal with principles and theories of literature rather than with criticism of individuals, yet it may be profitable to refer to one or two major critical essays in order that a fair idea may be

given of the Marxist view of literature. To this end we shall select first the comments of George Lukács on two celebrated novels — Balzac's *Lost Illusions* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* not merely because these are two major works of nineteenth-century European literature but also because Lukács is one of the most distinguished of modern Marxist critics. According to Lukács, *Lost Illusions* is a great work, because it shows how the bourgeois conception of life is shattered by capitalism, and how even culture is converted into a commodity.[30] It is true that in this novel there are sordid pictures — although these are not all that the novel contains — of Parisian publishing conditions and of the mendacity of modern journalism; and it is true, too, that the nominal hero of the novel, Lucien, has all his ideals shattered one after another, partly on account of the tricks played on him by certain crooks but largely on account of his own weakness and 'rootlessness'. But the novel, although it contains all these things, is great not because of these descriptions, vivid as they are, but because of the subtlety and richness of the human emotions portrayed in it. Camusot is a banker who divides his loyalties between a lawfully-wedded wife whose birthday he scrupulously observes and a mistress who is on the stage; the mistress herself sponges on the tradesman but is passionately fond of the young poet Lucien. She first of all hides her passion from the banker but when deceit proves irksome, ignores monetary considerations and openly throws Camusot overboard. It is the mental resilience of these characters,

the richness and complexity of their personality in which we find the greatness of Balzac's genius. If we take only the episode of Lucien's boots and watch how the different characters react to it, we get an idea of the secret of creative art. These characters are certainly conditioned by their *milieu* and so was Balzac by what he saw and experienced, but he could endow his creations with life only because his imagination used his experiences as materials which it dominated in the sense that he gave them a form, and the characters are living, too, not because their personality is derived from and determined by circumstances but because they can give their environment a new orientation and a new significance. This capacity which is inherent in the mind, is not to be found in matter even though we may assume with Marx that the human mind has grown out of matter. Lukács half recognizes this autonomy of the spirit when he says that 'Lucien de Rubempré, on the stage, seems to react independently to the internal and external forces which hamper his rise and which help or hinder him as a result of apparently fortuitous personal circumstances or passions, but which, whatever form they take, always spring from the same social environment which determines his aspirations and ambition.'[31] For art and literature, Lucien's independence is not a *seeming*, but a reality, and failure to appreciate this independence is the primary limitation of Marxist criticism.

Lost Illusions, like the majority of Balzac's work, lays emphasis on the social *milieu*, and criticism along so-

called 'realist' lines is wrong-headed only because of over-emphasis. But such criticism is entirely inappropriate when applied to a novel like *Anna Karenina* which is a drama of psychological tension. Lukàcs tries to explain the psychological complexities in this great novel through an examination of the characteristics which he supposes were derived from the classes to which the principal figures belonged and from the feudal-capitalistic-bureaucratic background of Tsarist Russia. For him Oblenski, Vronsky and Karenin are only superb types showing the 'capitalization' and the corresponding bureaucratization of the Russian nobility, and thus he totally misses the human significance of the subtle and complex problems to which the novel owes its greatness. In course of his elaborate analysis Lukács has to say something about almost every male character, but he does not mention Karenina's son, who plays such an important part in complicating his mother's tragedy. He would be a problem in any form of society where parents live together for some time and then part, because in the event of such a rupture he belongs to both and to neither. Lukács is not interested in the intricacies of personality, because for him 'what is outside the average in Anna Karenina's figure and fate is not some individually pathological exaggeration of a personal passion, but the clear manifestation of the social contradiction in *bourgeois* love and marriage'.[32] What he and other Marxists fail to notice is that if what is outside the average in Anna Karenina's figure and fate were only the manifestation of

a social contradiction, it would be equally clearly manifested in the lives of other members of the bourgeoisie, and if Anna is more sensitive than others, it is exactly this sensitivity which is the most relevant thing in art. These critics fail, further, to realize that every social organization is a pattern into which sensitive individuals find it difficult to fit themselves, just because they are individuals and sensitive and the contradiction is not so much in the organization — capitalistic or communist, as between the delicate sensibilities of an individual and the broad, rough-and-ready perceptions of society.

Another aspect of Marxist attitude to literature is seen in the criticisms of Christopher Caudwell, who, however, is looked upon by some Marxists as essentially idealistic. But his criticisms are important because he lays constant emphasis on Marx's central thesis that life expresses itself not in abstract thinking but in human sensuous activity. In Caudwell's opinion, poetry cannot be separated from the society whose specifically human activity secretes it.[33] He complains that Shaw's characters are walking intellects and points out that truth is a social product and not a thing that one clever man can find alone.[34] It is well-known that in Shaw's view the life-force is ever striving after intenser self-consciousness, but a Marxist would say that being takes precedence over knowing and man's conscious life is only a fitful gleam on the mass of his total existence. Caudwell points out that even when Shaw does create a heroic character like Caesar or Joan of Arc, he does not realize that these persons, 'in response

to the unformulated guidance of experience, call into existence tremendous talent forces of whose nature they can know nothing' and that 'he is bound to suppose that all that they brought about they consciously willed'.[35] Elaborating this thesis of Caudwell, Alick West says that the defect of *Saint Joan* is that Shaw gradually eliminates from the action what has been its mainspring — the movement of the people, and that Joan herself does not come from the movement. She creates it by her personal qualities, and the people follow.[36]

Marxism gets into difficulties as soon as it sets about explaining the role of consciousness which it cannot neglect in the manner of older materialists, and to which, consistently with its materialist bias, it can give neither primacy nor independence. In the essay on Shaw in *Studies in a Dying Culture*, Caudwell says at the same time that thought guides action (p. 4) and that thought must follow the grain of action (p. 13), and the statement that consciousness is a fitful gleam is succeeded by the irreconcilable conclusion that it has a kind of shell-like toughness about it (p. 6). If men make history, if they change circumstances, it is by virtue of what is distinctive of humanity, and when Lenin says that sensation, thought, consciousness are the supreme products of matter organized in a particular way,[37] this pride of place must be due to what is not to be found in matter and is the exclusive possession of the mind, namely consciousness. If Shaw has laid emphasis on the conscious willing of some of his heroes — Saint Joan, of course, is partly unaware of her

originality — he has done what Marxism, if it professes to be dialectical, cannot object to, but then if it concedes to spirit any power which is not a 'function of matter', it loses its materialist character. This explains why Marxist criticism, otherwise so strident, becomes hesitant, irrelevant and often confused when from an examination of the artist's environment, it proceeds to an appraisal of art *qua* art. An account of the Athens of Aeschylus may be interesting, it may even help an understanding of Aeschylus's art, but such an account must not be taken as a substitute for literary criticism, for, it does not touch the inner significance of Aeschylean drama. True appreciation must try to recapture, however tenuously, the spirit of literature, its aesthetic rather than environmental qualities.

It may be said that much of the above criticism will apply to any kind of monism — Marxist as well as Hegelian, that if the Marxist theory of the role of consciousness is unsatisfactory so must be the Hegelian theory of the identity of the rational and the real. This is partly true, and it is because Hegel made the Idea absolute that Hegelianism deteriorated into a worship of the Prussian state. But it must also be pointed out that when Hegel affirmed the identity of the rational and the real, he did not mean by the real what an empiricist would mean by it and it should be remembered, too, that the passage from mind to matter is easier than the passage from matter to mind, for the mind consciously knows matter and tries to utilize it, dominate it, whereas whatever influence

matter exercises over the mind is unconscious, and even if matter has produced consciousness, it has created a Frankenstein's monster that is alien to it and wants to master it.

Life, as all monistic philosophy must admit, is a whole and a unity, and it is not possible to draw any line of demarcation between contemplation and action; action is the object of contemplation and contemplation springs out of and leads to action. The same thing is true of the relationship between the individual and the society. The individual's actions are social actions and social actions are all done by individuals. After making allowance for this fundamental unity of life and action, we must recognize that the artistic activity is primarily a theoretical activity and that a work of art is produced by individual genius which derives materials from the outside world but fills them with a new significance. The painter does many things besides painting, but he is a painter only because he knows how to paint, and that is what distinguishes him from people who are not painters. It is this mystery of genius which Marxist criticism is precluded by its assumptions from exploring and evaluating.

Although Marxist criticism fails to realize the importance of the formative imagination, it has made a valuable contribution to the understanding of literature by laying emphasis on the richness and significance of the 'content' as distinct from the 'form' of art. There is a tendency in idealist criticism to make light of the experiences and ideas which are the substance of artistic creation, and such

a tendency cannot but lead to an attenuation of the total meaning of art and literature. The poet's world may not be a reflexion of the material world; but although a new world, it is made up of materials supplied by what we call the world of actual events in which the poet lives as a man amongst men. Marx complains that private property or '*the sense of having* has taken the place of *all* physical and spiritual senses' and made man one-sided, and he thinks that the abolition of private property will enable us to adapt our 'all-sided being in an all-sided manner'.[38] Leaving out the question of private property as irrelevant to our argument, we may say that the more many-sided the artist's experience and the larger his ideas, the better his work will be, provided that his formative imagination has the power of transforming the materials it works on, but he is an artist not because he has certain ideas and experiences but because he has the power of transforming them.

CHAPTER VI

Alexander

I

SAMUEL Alexander's theories on art and literature are especially significant because his approach is realistic, and from that point of view they are a corrective to the doctrines of romantic and idealistic writers for whom the creative imagination is a divine frenzy which seizes hold of a poet and makes him the trumpet of its own prophecies. There is not much in common between Alexander's realism and dialectical materialism, but on two fundamental points there is agreement between these two doctrines. Most writers on art and poetry believe that aesthetic beauty is a creation of the imagination;* indeed, the large majority of them start with a proposition which to many students of philosophy seem self-evident and has seemed so since the days of Berkeley, viz. that physical existence is itself spiritual and has no existence save in the mind.[1] This is an assumption which neither the Marxists nor Alexander will allow, but in the creation of beauty, Alexander makes mind joint controller with material. The second point of affinity between Alexander's realism and Marxist materialism is that the

* Even Plato, who is a realist in his own way, regards physical existence as a reflexion of the world of Forms, and he, too, looks upon artistic creation as traceable to inspiration which is non-material.

two doctrines are eminently practical; both Marx and Alexander look upon knowing as a part of doing. All truth in aesthetics depends on our recognizing the principle that 'we know in and through acting'.[2]

Here, however, the similarity ends. When Alexander refers to action in the context of aesthetics he never means social or economic activity, for he does not think that such activity has a determining effect on the creative imagination. What he refers to is the specific activity of the artist by which his creative impulse overflows into expressive material — words, marble, or pigments — and produces a work of art. It is the distinction of this approach to art and literature that it regards the materials used by the artist as entering into and determining the quality of his creation. Art is expression, but it will not be correct to say that the artist's work is first produced in the head, and then, through a process, more technical than creative, put down in communicable material form. In Alexander's opinion, expression cannot be a purely mental event. The external medium through which the artist expresses himself enters into the creative process, and a work of art is not merely intuited in the artist's brain; it is also revealed in the material used by him — in words or paints or marble. It is true that the artist starts with a preliminary excitement about the subject which partly chooses its materials, but what Alexander wants to emphasize is that the material is not a passive medium; rather it, too, chooses and modifies the images, and the expression is not completed until the possibilities of the

material have been fully exploited. Thus a word chosen by the poet may suggest and demand other words and the artist finds himself compelled by his material to fresh and altered imagination. It is to this formative capacity inherent in the material that Alexander traces the difficulty of translating poetry from one language to another, because translation in changing the medium also modifies the original images which have no existence apart from the words in which they are expressed.[3]

II

The creative process may, according to Alexander, thus be outlined: There are many objects in the outside world which arouse a passionate excitement in the artist. Here is the first stage in which he has not started giving it an artistic form, but has just steeped himself in it. He will be able to give it an artistic form, that is to say, his response will be aesthetic, if only he has been able to switch himself off from all practical interests (here Alexander is very near Croce), and his excitement has become contemplative. But to be an artist he must have another capacity, he must be able to find his excitement revealed in certain materials — words, sounds, pigments or clay. This revelation is a gradual process, and the materials which to him appear to be endowed with vitality dominate his ideas as much as he dominates them, and the artistic product is not complete until he has finished expressing what he wanted to say. His excitement

is a directed one in more senses than one. It is detained and fixed by the subject-matter; it is a theoretical and contemplative excitement, because it does not seek expression in action; it is practical, because it reveals itself in certain materials which are charged with an original significance. From this point of view we may say that there is complete fusion between content and form, because the content is revealed only as it is elaborated into a material form. 'In poetry for instance the sound of the words, their rhythm, metre, etc., are integral to the work, and perhaps the element of prior value.'[4]

Although man alone is an artist in the true sense of the term, yet he has his predecessors in the animal world, and he, too, sometimes employs art without being an artist. The bee and the beaver are excellent architects, and the nightingale sings as sweetly as man — and even better. But we do not call the beaver and the bee or the nightingale artists, because — here we find an important characteristic of art — their actions are instinctive rather than purposive. It is the spontaneous overflow of their animal instincts which express themselves in their constructions, architectural and musical. The ends are attained rather than willed. Another characteristic of these constructions is that they are severely practical. The beaver and the bee build storehouses for their food and the nightingale's song is a call to mating. The same thing may be said about those human constructions in which the impulse is practical, in which man proposes a utilitarian end and directs his constructive

activity accordingly. Our pots and pans, our clothing and our engineering — all bear testimony to our constructive skill, but such work, although it may be beautiful, is craft rather than art because it is subordinated to practical ends. If we can look at a pot and a beautiful piece of furniture contemplatively, without reference to practical needs, we shall enjoy them aesthetically.

One of the principal characteristics of art — a characteristic it shares with Truth and Goodness — is its disinterestedness. We value Truth, Goodness and Beauty 'for their own sakes' without reference to any practical end they may or may not serve; in short, we view them contemplatively. Goodness, which is the goal of morality, is the satisfaction of the instinct of sociality, and knowledge, which strives after truth, is an expression of the impulse of curiosity, and it is the urge for construction which begets works of fine art. Although there is this fundamental unity of aim, these values which Alexander looks upon as the highest human values are not to be confused with one another, because the differences among them is as fundamental as the contemplative disinterestedness which gives them unity. In knowledge or the attainment of truth, the mind, although active, subordinates itself to matter or the object that is intended to be known; the mind wants to know things as they are, and although it introduces categories, formulas and constructions of its own, these are intended as aids to the acquisition of an undistorted picture of reality. In the world of ethics, however, the mind, according to Alexander,

is supreme; not only does it impose its own standards but even the materials which it controls and determines the value of are human passions, that is to say, a kind of mental objects. 'Thus,' concludes Alexander, 'in science the personality, and in morals the external material, seem each in turn to vanish in favour of the other ingredient.'[5]

In art, however, both ingredients are equally palpable, and mind and material have joint control. It is necessary to ascertain the contribution made by each of these factors to the production of a work of art. A realist like Alexander starts with the central fact that artistic activity means the manipulation of certain materials, and the artist does not so much impose his vision on his materials as discover it in them. But one must not go too far. Mere materials are dead; they become a creative agent only when the artist's inspiration has breathed life into them. As T.E. Hulme remarks, 'The nature of material is never without a certain influence. If they had not been able to use granite, the Egyptians would probably not have carved in the way they did. But then the material did not produce the style. If Egypt had been inhabited by people of Greek race, the fact that the material was granite, would not have made them produce anything like Egyptian sculpture.'[6]

The starting-point of constructive activity is, as mentioned already, the excitement brought about by what may be called the subject-matter of art — the face of a man or a woman, a landscape or any other thing that

may generate passions, which Alexander calls material passions in order to distinguish them from the purely formal passion of art. These material passions are only useful stimuli; they help to detain and fix the attention of the artist, but by themselves they are not artistic. Such passions often find outlet in practical activity which has nothing to do with art. Even when there is no such scope for external expression, they have not necessarily entered the domain of art. It is only when such passions, dissociated from practical interests, are contemplated as the content of expression that they become aesthetic. The subject-matter, therefore, is by itself devoid of any artistic value. Equally is it true that the materials of art — sounds or paints — are without any aesthetic significance; they become valuable only when they have been successfully exploited. That is to say, although the subject-matter is important as providing the necessary stimulus, and no expression is possible without a material medium, yet the really creative element is the formal or constructive impulse. Alexander warns us that 'we must not understand form as mere arrangement in space or time, but as the system of relations in which the parts of the material are unified; the form of a picture is dynamic as much as that of music, the form of a poem is not merely an arrangement of sounds, nor even of sounds with their meanings, but the interplay of them'.[7]

The above theory may with some plausibility be advanced with regard to music or painting or sculpture where the materials have no significance of their own

but acquire artistic value from the form imposed upon them by artists, but it can have only a limited relevancy to poetry where the material is composed of words that have a significance apart from poetry — in science and philosophy as also in practical life. Alexander meets this difficulty by saying that words in poetry have meanings in a more intimate sense than in prose or practical life. Words used in science or philosophy have meanings attached to them but poetical words are *charged* with meanings. 'Words,' says he, 'are sounds which carry meanings with them and the two cannot be parted. But the meanings belong in poetry to the essence of the word and the words are not mere symbols to indicate meanings as they are in practical or scientific speech.'[8] The poet is partly creative and partly passive. He is like a reed through which every wind from nature or human affairs blows music, but he also gives to his material an import which it does not of itself possess. The meaning with which the poet charges words is the criterion by which we can not only distinguish between poetry and philosophy but also realize the significance of philosophical poetry. Spinoza and Wordsworth were equally excited by the spirit which pervades nature, but Spinoza was a philosopher and Wordsworth a poet, and from the constructional point of view, the difference lay, according to Alexander, in Spinoza's words having meanings attached to them and Wordsworth's words being completely fused into their meanings.[9] A philosophical poem can claim to be poetry only if there is a complete

fusion of thought and speech; it is merely an intellectual and quasi-imaginative exercise if they have been imperfectly blended.

III

If complete fusion be the aim of constructional activity, music is certainly the most formal of arts, and there is some basis for Pater's assertion that all the other arts aspire towards the condition of music, because it is the one art in which there is no distinction between form and content. Poetry tries to emancipate words from their ordinary meanings, but it can never rid itself entirely from their slavery. In music, the sounds have no meanings corresponding to poetical meanings, and they do not represent any model or any idea as painting or sculpture may do. Pure or absolute music, as distinguished from programme music, has no subject or content extraneous to the tones and their relations which constitute its form. It is for this reason that Alexander looks upon music as the most poetical of all the arts, and it is this lack of a distinct content in music which leads him to reject the popular notion that art is the expression of emotions.[10] Emotions may excite the artistic instinct and may even evoke images, but the work of art is to be found in the completed images alone, and not in the vague, rudimentary anticipations that form the subject-matter from which artistic activity detaches itself. 'Emotion is a poor and improbable way of describing the meaning of

a Mass of Bach, the Eroica or the Fifth Symphony, a concerto, or even less, a minuet of Mozart. Fancy, and much more, thought or will are equally applicable descriptions, if all of them were not alike irrelevant, and did not music mean only the form of its tones.....'[11]

Allied to music is architecture, where, too, beauty lies not in any idea represented but in the relations of the materials — stone, wood, brick or whatever else may be used. Thus when Hegel declared that the Greek temple conveyed the ideas of finitude and limitation and the Gothic cathedral embodied in its soaring columns the infinitude appropriate to Christian conceptions of the divine, he was expressing literary or historical or religious ideas and not making aesthetic criticism of two types of architectural forms.[12] But architecture has something to do with the physical world; it cannot be as pure an art as music, for every building has some practical purpose and its architectural beauty is to some extent a superfluity. Architecture achieves artistic quality in so far as it transcends utility, but if the element of utility were altogether removed, architecture would go out of existence. Thus there are two elements in architectural art: one representational and utilitarian and the other formal, and this may be made the basis of distinction in all arts, pure music excepted. Art represents something, an emotion, or an idea or an object, and to that extent it is representative rather than constructive. This is the 'prose' of the art. If the idea or object represented becomes prominent, as in an allegorical story or a pornographic picture, we have

illustration rather than art. The important point to remember is that in all the arts, and not merely in music and architecture, beauty is derived from the formal relations of the materials employed. The greater the emphasis on this relationship, and the more effective the suppression of the mere subject-matter, the more 'poetical' the art is. But if in addition to merely formal relations, there is also a reference to the subject, if the art is analytic and representational, we have an element of prose in it, too. It must also be remembered that except in pure music, the subject-matter can never be altogether abolished, and therefore, it must be assigned its legitimate part in the making of art. Following Pater, Alexander makes the greatness of art depend on its subject-matter, but not its beauty. 'No doubt,' says he, 'the greater the subject, the more splendid the poem, but the subject as such is indifferent to art.'[13] Thus there seem to be two criteria in the judgement of a work of art: the criterion of beauty and the criterion of greatness, and although the subject-matter with its material passions may have nothing to do with the criterion of beauty, it is the basis of assessment in the criterion of greatness. Beauty and greatness are to be understood as two separate categories, because beauty which is the soul of form inheres in the relations of materials whereas the subject-matter is derived from human experience. These two worlds are disparate but not incompatible.

The question may now be asked: What is the connexion between the subject-matter and the world of fact from

which it is derived? i.e. how is poetic truth related to true knowledge? The first point to remember is that in the domain of art the subject-matter is as the mind conceives it to be. That is to say, although the materials which the artist uses — paints or marble — have a physical existence independent of the mind and although the artistic impulse is excited in the first instance by the world of fact, yet the ideas and emotions are his own, and to that extent all art, in Alexander's opinion, is an illusion, and the 'content' of art is not the world of fact, but that world transformed by the artistic impulse. But it will be a mistake to suppose that artistic illusion is like ordinary perceptual illusion which 'disappears to better acquaintance and is recognized to be an illusion. Whereas the illusion is of the essence of a work of art — ceases, therefore, to be illusion and makes the object significant.'[14] This power of endowing objects with significance is inherent in the materials employed by the artist, and beauty is a product of 'the coalescence of the material and the mind'. It is the materials of art which are the common property of the poet and the reader or the artist and the connoisseur, which make art and poetry the common possession of mankind; in other words, it is the communicability of beauty that gives us an assurance of its objectivity, and the poet or the artist is partly creative and partly passive. The artist starts with his own impressions or ideas, but because he handles materials which are the common possession of many minds he can discover in them meanings which have a universal validity.

'There remains,' says Santayana in a passage approvingly quoted by Alexander, 'the genius of the poet himself. But the greatest thing about this genius is its power of losing itself in its objects, its impersonality. We seem to be reading not the poetry of a poet about things, but the poetry of things themselves. That things have their poetry, not because of what we make them symbols of, but because of their own movement and life, is what Lucretius proves once for all to mankind.'[15]

IV

The theory outlined above is remarkable for the emphasis it lays on the importance of the materials and for its common-sense assumption of the existence of a physical world external to the mind; it is also remarkable for the place it assigns to communication as an essential element in the artistic process. If once the necessity for communication is recognized, art cannot be regarded as the satisfaction of a personal, lyrical impulse. If the work of art belonged to the artist alone, communication would be unnecessary and inexplicable except on purely commercial considerations. If, on the other hand, communication is a social necessity, the work of art cannot spring in full panoply from the artist's head as Minerva from the head of Jove. It is a universal experience that the actual composition of a work of art takes a long time, involves revision and alteration, including sometimes a complete deviation from the original plan. It is

unthinkable, therefore, that an architectural wonder like the *Tajmahal*, which took twenty years to build, was first conceived as a whole in the artist's brain and then executed. It is equally improbable that the world's greatest literary creations like the *Divina Commedia*, *Hamlet* or *Faust*, which bear obvious marks of prolonged thinking and frequent revision, were first imagined completely and then externalized. It is more plausible — as Alexander argues — that the artist starts with some excitement — intellectual and/or emotional — and this excitement, if it arouses his formative imagination or constructive impulse, will express itself in communicable works of art, which are creative only in so far as they are communicable, and must, therefore, depend partly on the materials the artist finds suitable for his genius and his subject-matter.

There are some materials which seem to be peculiarly adapted to some themes. For example, painting is more vivid than music and music has greater movement than sculpture or even painting. If a poet has a flair for vivid action, he will go in for drama; if he is contemplative and passionate, he will be a lyrical poet. So far Alexander is on the right tack. But the importance he gives to materials makes him blind to the creative side of art. He does, indeed, speak of the vitality of art, and he does admit, too, that the form is foreign to the material, but these views are hard to reconcile with the modifying, almost determining influence he attributes to mere material. Indeed, even the language he uses shows his bias;

he looks upon art as the fulfilment of the constructive rather than the creative impulse, thus minimizing the agency of the artist's genius in the production of art. As an illustration of the influence exercised by materials, he refers to the difficulty of translating poetry from one language to another.[16] It is difficult, he says, because the materials, i.e. the words in which poetry is expressed, are not the same in any two languages. What he forgets is that this difficulty is due not so much to the difference in word-materials as to the uniqueness of the creative moment. Not only is it impossible to translate a poem from one language to another but it is equally impossible even for the poet himself to paraphrase it in the same language. We should also remember that a poem is more difficult to translate than a novel or a prose drama not because poetry uses any peculiar material — the materials are words in prose as well as poetry — but because poetry is more personal than any other form of art.

It is because Alexander is not sufficiently alive to the personal element in the creative process that his definition of form on which he lays so much emphasis is often vague and not always free from contradiction. He says that the meaning of the material of art — word, marble or drawing — is 'part of it in the same way as in the perception of an orange the round yellow form does not merely stand for the juiciness of the orange but is actually qualified by it and fused with it into one'.[17] In what sense the round yellow form qualifies the juiciness of the orange is difficult to realize. We may rather say that

the orange in any other form and colour would taste as sweet. Alexander defines form as the system of relations in which the parts of the material are unified and are in a state of constant interplay. But form, as Alexander also recognizes, is foreign to the material; it is imported by the mind which with its plastic stress makes the material significant. If the parts are to be unified and if the interplay is to be anything more than mere technical skill, the vital principle is to be communicated by the artist himself so that art has to be looked upon as the expression of the artist's personality, his emotions and judgements, though all expression need not be artistic; any attempt to wriggle out of this position is bound to involve the theorist in confused and contradictory explanations.

Alexander tries to solve his difficulties by drawing a distinction between formal and representational art; the material passions of the artist, which are the subject-matter of art, have, according to him, an important place in the representational arts but none at all in the formal, where, as in pure music, the content is reduced to the vanishing point. But the content is not as indifferent to form as some critics seem to think; even Alexander recognizes that 'newer ideas seek forms consonant with themselves. *Hamlet* is not more beautiful than the *Oedipus at Colonus* but it is different in form because of the difference in subject.'[18] In Alexander's opinion, the content is irrelevant to the aesthetic aspect of art; it does not make a work of art beautiful, but it is the basis of 'greatness' in art. If *Hamlet* has a larger subject than the

Oedipus at Colonus, it will be a greater drama but not a more beautiful work of art. But the impression produced by a poem or a picture is a totality formed by the fusion of all the elements, and to say that a poem is splendid or great and not beautiful or that it is beautiful but not splendid or great is to invent a misleading distinction. We look upon the relations discovered in the materials as organic to the aesthetic impression for the simple reason that without physical materials there can be no construction and no communication. So far Alexander is right in his emphasis. But the same argument may be advanced in support of subject-matter also. Without a subject, without material passions, there can be no creation, and if the subject 'diminishes towards the vanishing point' and becomes one with formal relations, these latter must — at least, in part — be what they are because of the peculiarities of the subject-matter.

The relation between poetry and the other arts will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. Here it will be necessary only to point out that the importance Alexander gives to materials as a constituent of a work of art is misconceived, and for a variety of reasons. First of all, he underestimates the creative activity of the artist and forgets that materials by themselves are passive and inert. It is the artist's genius — his concepts and his command of form — by which the materials are endowed with artistic significance. The materials have certainly their potentialities and their limitations; as Tanner and Straker point out in Shaw's play, what cannot be spoken may

be whistled and sung — or danced and painted. But formal relations are not so much discovered in the materials as imposed upon them. Secondly, Alexander is led by his theory into making confused statements about the relation of art to truth. In *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, he says that poetry is a higher kind of art than prose because it takes us nearer to the heart of things, that poetry expresses authentic life, that 'the incense-breathing morn' is morning herself as she lives.[19] But, as pointed out earlier, he says, too, that illusion is of the essence of art, and he does not clearly indicate how an illusion can express authentic life or take us near to the heart of things. An illusion will not cease to be illusory if it is shareable or communicable. Perhaps he means that art gives us a new reality in which the object is made 'significant'. This means that we have moved in a new circle and are confronted by our old problem: Is the significance of art a quality of the materials or is it a creation of the artist? Even if we accept the former hypothesis, we are left wondering how mere materials — say, paints or sounds — can give us an insight into life.

The distinction between 'prose' and 'poetry', too, is pointless, and like all pointless distinctions, confusing. All art is poetical, if it is art, that is to say, if it is a thing with 'a life of its own'. It does not matter if its purposes are or are not set out in detail provided that they are organically connected with the aesthetic design. Alexander seems to think that 'prose' art would be bad if only the purposes are obtrusive, but it is difficult to draw any

valid distinction between purposes that are set out in detail and those that are obtrusive. It is a more straightforward thing to say that the utilitarian and intellectual aspects of the subject-matter enter into and are transformed by the imagination, and it is this transformation that makes all art 'poetical'. There can thus be bad 'poetry' but no good 'prose' in art. The architectural beauty of a set of office rooms is dependent on its utilitarian purpose, because that purpose partly determines the form of 'form', and the total work of art is a work of art only when the imagination has put life into it.

CHAPTER VII

The Meaning of Meaning

I

IT has already been pointed out that artistic activity is largely constructive; it means the conscious manipulation of materials to some purpose. The materials for poetry are words, and words have meanings. Many critics try to trace the secret of poetic beauty to the meanings with which words are charged. The poet partly imposes his own meanings and partly discovers anew the meanings embedded in words. In whatever way we might approach the problem of poetic creation, there is no doubt that poetry consists of words that have sounds such as music has, but that they have also meanings which musical sounds do not ordinarily possess. Critics, therefore, are justified in trying to explain the significance of poetry in terms of the meanings of words, and of such critics the most well-known is I. A. Richards, whose researches are important for more reasons than one. Richards is a teacher; he has not merely thought out certain theories but also made experiments with them in the class-room. Indeed, it seems that these theories have partly grown out of his work with his pupils. Another merit of his work is its analytical thoroughness. He has taken up the total meaning of a word and so minutely analysed it into all its component elements that it seems that no shade

of meaning has escaped his searching glance. Last and first, his theories are remarkable for their comprehensiveness. Not only is his theory of meaning contextual, but he looks at poetry against the larger background of life, and the meanings of words are important to him only because they help to make poetry a valuable activity. His theory of communication through words is sought to be integrated to a general theory of value.

It is necessary, therefore, to examine first of all what this general theory of value is and how it is connected with his theory of communication. Man, we all know, is the product of a long process of evolution dating far back to the amoeba. Alexander argues that aesthetically man's distinctiveness is that he is disinterested and purposive. Although Richards believes in the disinterestedness of art, he arrives at it in a way different from Alexander's. For him, the most important feature in man's development seems to be predominantly in 'the direction of greater complexity and finer differentiation of responses'.[1] If that is so, that form of life will be considered progressive which gives larger and larger scope for the development of impulses, responses and the satisfaction of the largest number of appetencies. Indeed, the worth of an impulse depends not merely on its own urgency but also on its not interfering with other appetencies, equally important. 'The most valuable states of mind then are those which involve the widest and most comprehensive co-ordination of activities and the least curtailment, conflict, starvation and restriction.'[2]

Value, therefore, depends on width, co-ordination and systematization, and it is here that poetic activity finds its justification. The impulses of ordinary men are chaotic, disorganized and subject to frequent frustration. Poetry is free from the inhibitions and abstractions of everyday life; the poetic experience is 'more highly and more delicately organized than ordinary experience'. It does not mean that poetry is an escape from life; the difference between the two is one of degree rather than kind. Poetry portrays the same experiences as the ordinary man encounters. Only their number is larger and their co-ordination better. In yet another sense poetry is related to life; for the 'conciliations of impulses' we find in poetry help us to live better. It does not matter if the poetic impulse leads only to expression whereas the impulses of ordinary men lead to action; only its action is 'incipient and imaginal' rather than overt.[3] The poetical world is, indeed, free from the irrelevancies and accidents of everyday experience, and the ordinary man has poetical experience only at rare moments, during the shock of a bereavement or in an undreamt-of happiness, for example; but the relationship between poetry and life is one of continuity rather than contrast. After reading poetry we feel that our contact with actuality has been increased, the accidental and adventitious aspects of life have receded and our impulses and appetencies have been fulfilled, if only in imagination.

II

The poet's experiences differ from the ordinary man's experiences not only because they cover a wider field or are more subtly differentiated and organized, but also because they are more communicable. This communicability, although it may be separately examined, is not isolated from value. Indeed, the formal elements of art, its powers of expression, are a part of the process of organization by which impulses are both differentiated and co-ordinated. Poetical experiences are exceptionally rich but they are also extraordinarily heterogeneous. It is the formal elements of communication that make them 'uniform', 'regular' and 'stable'. This, indeed, is the principal attraction of rhythm and its specialized form, metre, because both of them depend on expectancy and repetition. There are surprisals and disappointments but these are swallowed up in a general sense of satisfaction resulting from the fulfilment of expectation.

The total effect of poetry is one of coenesthesia, in which the whole consciousness is enriched by a mass of complex sensations or perceptions, and the result is order and peace. The significant thing in poetic experience is not 'the exquisiteness of the moment', but a balancing of ecstasies, and an impression of complexity and harmony. This, according to Richards, is the secret of the disinterestedness of art and poetry. 'To respond, not through one narrow channel of interest, but simultaneously and coherently through many, is to be

disinterested...'[4] In everyday life we are guided by one particular impulse, or our minds are an arena of conflicting attitudes. In poetry and art 'we cease to be orientated in one definite direction', and yet there is no disorder, the 'equilibrium of opposed impulses' being the basis of aesthetic activity and response. It is this equilibrium which critics describe as artistic detachment or impersonality. The best 'life is that in which as much as possible of our personality is engaged', in which there is no isolated ecstasy, no narrowing, no special emphasis.

The secret of poetic activity lies then in a network of relationships, in the richness of the total attitude. If complexity is the special feature of poetry, this potentiality is to be found also in the language which is its vehicle or expression. That words have a fixed, proper meaning is a superstition. Richards replaces what he calls the Proper Meaning superstition by his context theory of meaning and by his doctrine of the interinanimation of words. The starting-point of his theory is that 'no word can be judged in isolation', 'a word is always a co-operating member of an organism', 'it utters not one meaning but a movement among meanings'. The technical name for the organism of which every word is a co-operating member is *context*, which, it need hardly be pointed out, is different from the literary context or setting, though the two are closely connected.[5] Richards's theory may be thus outlined: Many events recur together and are associated in our minds. Very soon we may

omit some parts of this cluster of events and represent them by a word or a sign, and whenever this sign is mentioned these parts will automatically appear before the mind, and it is this 'delegated efficacy' which may be called the meaning. Thus a context may be defined as '*a set of entities (things or events) related in a certain way: these entities have each a character such that other sets of entities occur having the same character and related by the same relation; and these occur "nearly uniformly"*'.[6]

An example will make the theory clearer. We have seen many instances of banks on both sides with flowing water and have given these things the name 'river'. Whenever we see or hear the word 'river', our interpretation of it is our psychological reaction to it, as determined by past experience in similar situations and by our present experience; we at once think of flowing water with banks on both sides and the sign does duty for 'the missing context'. Similarly, whenever we see flowing water and banks on both sides, our minds go far back into the past when we have had experience of similar entities, and we give this new object the old name of 'river'. It is in this way that meanings grow out of one another and the total meaning resembles an organism with connected, interdependent parts sharing a common life. Perceiving and naming and thinking are all processes of 'sorting' and classification, based on resemblance. We call a thing a 'river' because it has similarity with many other things, and the name 'river' brings back to our minds the points of resemblance

between this thing and all other things of this 'sort' that have occurred before.

If resemblance is the essence of all meanings, what are we to say of metaphors which, too, are based on similarity? Are we to understand that all meanings are metaphorical? Here we touch the weakest spot in Richards's theory, for although he starts with a recognition of the difference between the ordinary meaning and the metaphorical, he gradually comes to give too wide a meaning to metaphor. The resemblance which is the basis of metaphor, as we understand it, is imposed by the poet, or by the unpoetical man in a rare flash of imagination, on two objects which have no obvious similarity. This is the meaning Richards seems to accept when he says in *The Meaning of Meaning* that whenever a word is 'taken outside the universe of discourse for which it has been defined, it becomes a metaphor'.[7] In *The Principles of Criticism*, too, he calls it 'the supreme agent by which disparate and hitherto unconnected things are brought together in poetry for the sake of the effects upon attitude and impulse which spring from their collocation and from the combinations which the mind then establishes between them'.[8] But in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* he describes it as the omnipresent principle of language, and in *Interpretation in Teaching*, he calls all thinking radically metaphoric. When we use a metaphor, we 'have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction'.[9] Thus when we speak

of the *leg* of a table, we have thoughts about what supports a table. 'The obvious difference,' says Richards, 'is that the leg of a table has only some of the characteristics of the leg of the horse. A table does not walk with its legs; they only hold it up, and so on. In such a case we call the common characteristics the ground of the metaphor.'[10] Here is an understatement which throws light on the limitations of Richards's theory. The point of the metaphor is not merely that there is one common characteristic but that otherwise there is complete dissimilarity.

If there be no difference between ordinary meanings and metaphors, the distinction between prose and poetry would vanish, too. Richards is aware of the risk of looking upon metaphor merely as an instance of giving names or meanings and proceeds to point out the distinctive features of a poetic metaphor. Poetical activity is continuous with everyday activities, but there is in it a subtler discrimination of responses, a finer balancing of opposites. So also in poetical metaphor there is combination of different ideas as in ordinary language, but here the tension is more taut. 'Some similarity,' says Richards in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (even though here he is anxious to point out the omnipresence of metaphor in language), "will be the ostensive ground of the shift (in the metaphorical transference), but the peculiar modification of the tenor which the vehicle brings about is even more the work of their unlikeness than of their likenesses.'[11] Thus when Hamlet speaks of fellows like

himself 'crawling between earth and heaven', the metaphorical force in *crawling* is derived less from man's similarities with vermin than from the differences that resist the imposition of these similarities. It may be argued that such a theory makes remoteness a characteristic of poetry; the more far-fetched the metaphor, the better it is for poetry. Richards seems to have no objection to making far-fetchedness a criterion for the judgement of poetical metaphors, provided the rest of the discourse can make the transference convincing. The word *house* seems to be an unsuitable symbol for *bread*, but when describing the wafer and the Divine Presence, Hopkins writes:

> Low-latched in leaf-light housel his too huge godhead,

the remoteness is overcome and the comparison is beautiful, because it is convincing.[12]

III

Richards's theory of metaphor seems to be confusing, because he is uncertain about the relationship between metaphor and ordinary speech. He starts with the questionable assumption that metaphor is nothing but sorting and all thinking is radically metaphoric and then proceeds to say that the modification of the tenor made by the vehicle is largely the work of their unlikeness—a conclusion which his peculiar premise does not warrant. Richards, however, finds another distinction between

ordinary meaning and poetical (or metaphorical) meaning, which is fundamental. If we trace the meanings of words, we find that they refer first to thoughts and then from thoughts to things. The first duty of words is to make a statement about things, that is to say, to be symbolic and referential. But besides this referential or symbolic use, words serve yet another purpose; they not only make statements about things but also evoke attitudes. That is to say, words may be used either referentially or emotively.* The distinction between poetry and prose is really a distinction between the emotive and symbolic uses of language.

Although poetry expresses feelings or attitudes, it also refers very often to things; or, in other words, poetical language has to be referential as well as emotive. But such complexity does not invalidate the fundamental distinction, for even if poetry makes any statements, such statements 'are there *as a means* to the manipulation and expression of feelings and attitudes, not as contributions to any body of doctrine of any type whatever'.[13] It may be necessary to the poet to make statements, or he may, if he approaches the musician, make a minimum use of the symbolic capacity of language, but his aim is always to evoke attitudes, never to make a reference for the sake of reference. The special feature of emotive

* In *Practical Criticism* Richards makes a fourfold division of meaning: sense, feeling, tone and intention. This division deserves no more than a passing notice in the present discussion which is taken up with general critical principles.

language is that it not only expresses the writer's attitude but evokes a corresponding, if not an identical, attitude in the listener or reader. Such communicative efficacy we cannot expect from mere symbolic or referential use of language which always refers to things and is concerned only with correctness of reference and logical presentation. But 'although very much poetry consists of statements, symbolic arrangements, capable of truth or falsity, (yet they) are used not for the sake of their truth or falsity but for the sake of the attitudes which their acceptance will evoke'.[14]

This difference between the symbolic and emotive uses of language has an important bearing on the nature of poetic belief. When we have belief in a thing in the scientific sense of the term, we affirm that the content of our belief is a matter of fact, that it is verifiable with reference to reality. This is possible if only language is used referentially, if words stand for things and do not evoke emotional attitudes. The question here is: Is this true in fact and is the connexion between different parts logical and consistent? The emotive use of language diverts the mind from logical and factual considerations. Poetry, in fact, seems to be a kind of hypnosis, and that, according to Ogden and Richards, is part of the usefulness of metrical and other devices; they serve to put the critical faculties to sleep and suppress the question: Is this so as a matter of fact?[15] If poetry and the arts express beliefs, as they often do, these must not be taken as scientific; they are only 'provisional acceptances' for the sake of

the imaginative experience which they make possible. It seems that Richards departs here from the view he expresses in connexion with the relation between poetic and other values, where he says that poetical values are just like other values; only the poet effects a wider, freer and more delicate network of connexions amongst his impulses than is possible for the ordinary man. But in distinguishing between emotive beliefs and scientific beliefs, he says that the difference is not one of degree but of kind.

IV

Richards is anxious to draw a line of demarcation between value and the communicative aspect of a work of art and says that it is possible to praise or condemn a work on either ground or both. He is very hard on Croce who, he says, fails to distinguish between value and communicative efficacy and mistakes synonym-hunting for criticism. But if for the moment we banish the value aspect and judge Richards's definition of a poem simply from the point of view of communicative efficacy, we find that it is the same as Croce's, the only difference being the addition or substitution of certain semi-technical terms borrowed from linguistics and physiology and psychology. Shorn of this technical appendage, Richards's theory is that poetry is the expression of emotions, and that is what Croce means when he defines poetry as intuition or the expression of

feelings and impressions. An ungenerous critic might, indeed, go so far as to say that Richards's animadversions on Croce proceed from an uneasy effort to conceal a debt. It is unnecessary to dilate on this aspect of poetry here because all that has been said of Croce's theory of expression will apply to Richards's theory of communication.

The distinction Richards draws between emotive beliefs and scientific beliefs is also very much on the lines of Croce. It is necessary, however, to point out one fundamental contradiction which vitiates Richards's critical theory. He believes that the poetical world and the real world are to be judged by the same standards; only the former is more valuable because more complex and better organized. But he says, too, that the bulk of beliefs in poetry are only provisional acceptances made for the sake of imaginative experience. It need hardly be said that the beliefs in ordinary life or in the field of science have not this provisional character; they are more secure and stable. Are we then to accept the view that what is provisional is more valuable than what is stable and secure? This, one is tempted to feel, is the consequence of a Crocean trying to forget his debt to the master.

Although Richards distinguishes between value and communicative efficacy, he knows that the two aspects of his work are inseparable, for value cannot be demonstrated except through the communication of what is valuable, but assuming that we have completely solved

the problem of communication, we have still to judge what has been communicated, to make a pronouncement upon its worth. D.W. Harding points out that analysing a poem in terms of attitudes and the interinanimation of impulses, references and attitudes would be as helpful as describing the effects of modern warfare in terms of the combination and disintegration of molecules.[16] Richards's psychological analysis must, therefore, be supported by a metaphysic of value. Unfortunately, the theory itself is, in spite of occasional references to value, psychological rather than axiological; not merely is it based on psychology but it cannot transcend the limitations of mere analysis. Richards suggests that value is quantitative[17] and holding that anything is valuable which satisfies an appetency, he proceeds to point out that the difference between ordinary experiences and poetical experiences consists in the larger number of impulses that have been co-ordinated in the latter. But there seems to be a double fallacy involved here. A poet is great not by virtue of the many impulses he satisfies or arouses but because of the peculiar tone and colour— in a word, the peculiar quality — of his experiences and expressions. Co-ordination, and organization as well, involves reference to a plan or an aim. We have eleven players in football, cricket and hockey, but they have to be organized and their efforts co-ordinated differently in each game. Richards gives his own case away when he elaborates his definition by saying that 'anything is valuable which will satisfy an appetency without

involving the frustration of some equal or *more important* appetency. . . .'[18] The only test by which the importance of one appetency over another can be assessed is qualitative, and once this is admitted, Richards's doctrine of value, which reminds one of Croce's theory of extension, falls to the ground.

V

Words, according to Richards, have no fixed meaning; their sense is enriched by 'neighbour words' and also by the contexts in which they have previously occurred. This is the full implication of what he calls the interinanimation of words, and the significance of a word can be gathered by what an unkind critic in *The Times Literary Supplement* (27 March 1937) called 'an attitude of alert irrelevance'. Thus when Cleopatra, taking up the asp, speaks of the *knot intrinsicate* of life, the meaning of the phrase is made up of the different senses of 'knot' and 'intrinsic' and 'intrinse' as well as 'intricate' and 'involved'. The significance of a sentence is not found by adding together the fixed meanings of words; rather 'words get their values from their togetherness and enter into infinitely subtler and more manifold relations than any addition can represent. A sentence, in brief, being the act of an organism, is itself an organism.' If that is so, ambiguity is not a stylistic fault but an inevitable consequence of the powers of language and an indispensable means of poetic utterance.[19]

William Empson, Richards's most devoted follower, sets out to explore the beauties of ambiguity, taking ambiguity as 'any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language'.[20] Empson illustrates his theme by analysing many passages and bringing out the diverse meanings hidden in them, and these poetical extracts are shown to have much more complex significance than would appear on a first reading. It must, however, be said that it is very difficult to accept Empson's general theory of ambiguity. Although intricacy may be a source of poetic beauty, if ambiguity is sought for its own sake, it will lead to dubiety, confusion and obscurity, and Empson himself admits that his analysis of one of Shakespeare's sonnets makes it appear to be muddled, and if that is so, analysis of this type will hinder appreciation rather than help it.[21] If ambiguity were the source of poetic beauty, then the best poetry would be that which can give us the largest number of puns. Empson cannot give adequate reasons why puns should be regarded as unimportant.[22] If ambiguity be the source of poetic beauty, verbal quibbling would be as respectable and 'manly' as any other device.

Empson himself recognizes that ambiguity by itself cannot make for beauty; to be poetical, it must be ambiguity of a particular type. 'In so far as an ambiguity sustains intricacy, delicacy, or compression of thought.., it is to be respected .... It is not to be respected in so far as it is due to weakness or thinness of thought....'[23]

It is, therefore, the quality of thought that matters and ambiguity is only a technical device. The subject may be looked at from yet another point of view. If there are alternative reactions or meanings, (*i*) they may be all equally important, or (*ii*) one of the alternatives may be more important than the others, or (*iii*) all the alternatives may be subordinate to a meaning which is suggested by all of them put together. In (*i*) the ambiguity is either a critic's invention with which the poet, who intended only one meaning, had nothing to do or it is a sign of weakness in the poet who does not know what to say or how to express himself without ambiguity. In (*ii*) it is the principal alternative which is the source of beauty and the alternative meanings are important only as contributing to its complexity and any alternative that does not help to enrich the principal meaning is to be rejected. The third type is the most important, because here all the alternatives combine to enrich the total meaning which is immanent in them and is yet beyond each of them separately.

The second and the third types which alone are poetically effective may run into each other. As an illustration we may take a type not considered by Empson. This is how Shylock reacts to the news that his daughter has given away a ring in exchange for a monkey. 'Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.'

This outburst of feeling suggests that Shylock treasures

the momory of his dead wife and can occasionally rise above purely mercenary considerations. But 'turquoise' implies value and Shylock's agonies are partly financial; it is interesting, too, that the only time Shylock remembers his wife he remembers her as a bestower of gifts. Which of the alternatives are we to accept? Does he lament the loss of a valuable ring or of a treasured memento? The second alternative is the more plausible, but the first is not to be neglected and the two together help to bring out the complexity of Shylock's character in which there is an amalgam of conflicting traits — affection, hatred, tribal loyalty and avarice. Where this complexity is wanting, ambiguity is ineffective. We may take as an illustration, Macduff's well-known comment: He has no children. Three interpretations have been suggested: '(*a*) They refer to Malcolm, who, if he had children of his own, would not at such a moment have suggested revenge.. (*b*) They refer to Macbeth, who has no children, and on whom, therefore, Macduff cannot take an adequate revenge. (*c*) They refer to Macbeth, who, if he himself had children, could never have ordered the slaughter of children.'[24] Interpretation (*a*) is very different from (*b*) and (*c*), and no poetical beauty can arise out of the possibility of either accepting (*a*) or (*b*) and (*c*). It is true that (*b*) and (*c*) may both be equally true, but not at the same time, and we do not know enough about the character of Macduff to be able to guess with any certainty what his feelings might be. Here there is no intricacy, for the alternatives — especially

(*a*) as opposed to (*b*) and (*c*) — are mutually exclusive; the reader of the spectator is at liberty to accept any one of them and then the others will not occur to him at all.

It may be objected that the above approach to Shakespeare lays too much emphasis on characterization in the great dramas. There has been of late a reaction from nineteenth-century criticism that looked upon the dramas as biographies of the principal *dramatis personae*. Some critics — Empson amongst them — think that the secret of Shakespeare's art, even his characterization, is to be found in the magic of his language. In *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, Empson traced richness of meaning to the existence of alternative possibilities in the grammatical structure, which he grouped under the general heading of ambiguity. But he seems to have abandoned the word as suggestive of doubt, and centres his attention on the analysis of complexity in single words. He argues that great dramas and long poems may be regarded as elaboration of the possibilities of certain key-words — 'honest' in *Othello*, 'dog' in *Timon of Athens*, 'fool' in *King Lear*, 'sense' in *The Prelude*, or 'wit' in *The Essay of Criticism*. Words are not mere counters, they are 'compacted doctrines', containing structures that are, in a long poem, gradually built up. 'To pretend that every long poem has one key-word which sums up all of it would of course be absurd. But one might expect to find more positive enriching of the key-word as the long poem goes forward than usually occurs; usually I think the

author assumes the whole structure at the start and leaves the reader to pick it up as best he can.'[25*]

Empson's theory is exemplified in his elaborate discussion of 'honest' in *Othello*, which may be considered here as an illustration of his critical method. The nineteenth century took Iago as an abstract term for 'Evil'; for Empson 'he is a critique on an unconscious pun', a product of a very actual interest in a word, which is used — in its adjectival and nominal forms — fifty-two times in the play. It had, in Elizabethan times, a hearty, individualist use among raffish, low people, which is a clue to the rank of Iago and Emilia. It not only meant chaste and honourable, but also denoted a man who has sturdy independence, who frankly accepts natural desires, who is always ready to 'blow the gaff', who does not live by any strict principle but who is nevertheless generous and faithful to friends.[26] If we take into consideration Iago's naturalness, frankness and sturdy independence, a good deal of the motive-hunting of the soliloquies must, in Empson's opinion, be seen as part of his 'honesty'; he enquires into his own motives and preferences, for he is interested to find out what they are. Iago is obviously the villain of the drama, and it has to be admitted further that his wickedness is a startling, alien thing, needing to be made intelligible. This Shakes-

*We may pass over as unimportant for the present discussion Empson's other conclusion that one of the uses of an equation-theory of meaning is to provide a satisfactory explanation of period-flavour in style.

peare succeeds in doing by using homely terms such as English villains would use, especially by means of puns on the well-known word — 'honest'. At least, these puns supply Iago with a reasonable basis for his legerdemain. Empson suggests that the shift in the meaning of 'honest' explains not merely the character of Iago but also that of Othello, for whom honesty is faithfulness, chastity, and honour. The opposition between the two chief actors may be reduced to a difference in the acceptation of 'honesty', and to both might be applied Emilia's abusive epithet of a murderous coxcomb who does not deserve a good wife. There is on this view a doubling of the theme of jealousy, for both Othello and Iago are jealous husbands and both regard sex as disgusting. Only Othello puts a fantastic value on love whereas Iago takes up a more realistic and an ironical — if not a positively cynical — attitude to sexual continence and faithfulness.

Although there is much subtlety in Empson's analysis, and also occasionally, as in the explanation of Iago's motive-hunting, a good deal of originality, the search for the secret of poetry in one key-word is an adventure on wrong lines. The first argument against this theory is one that Empson himself partly recognizes; it over-simplifies the significance of a poem or a drama. The undue emphasis laid on 'honest', an adjective applied frequently to Iago, obscures other aspects of a great play — its characters (Iago excepted), plot, and language. The attempt to put Iago and Othello under a common heading seems also to be far-fetched. Even if we confine

ourselves to Iago, there is more in him than can be compressed within the significance of a single word, and it is amusing that when Empson comes across a passage — the one about the daily beauty in Cassio, for example — which does not fit into his formula, he dismisses it as a crude use of a stage convention.[27] This narrowing of the significance of poetry is seen in all Empson's analyses of the structure of complex words. It is difficult to take seriously the suggestion that one reason why Milton used the word 'all' so frequently in *Paradise Lost* is that it is a partial pun on 'fall'. There is, indeed, a good deal of 'sensibility', 'sensuality' and 'sensibleness' — the various puns on 'sense' — in *Measure for Measure*, but Empson's criticism based on about ten uses of a single word leaves out much of the profounder significance of the play. The theory of inter-verbal implications not only oversimplifies the meaning of a poem but is fundamentally misleading; it rests on the view that words are not a mere medium in which to express thoughts and feelings but a means to restore life to order. Whatever the value of words, it must not be forgotten that their principal purpose is to convey the meaning which they complete. To give them logical primacy is to put the cart before the horse. Empson himself recognizes that there is an 'alienness' in Iago's wickedness which Shakespeare sought to make intelligible through the different senses of a homely English word. If that is so, our starting-point should be that 'alienness' from which we should work our way to words and other devices of expression.

There is a soul of poetry of which the meaning of words is the meaning; linguistic analysis which is an aid to criticism cannot take the place of criticism itself.[28]

VI

Caroline Spurgeon, who subjects Shakespeare's images to a detailed examination, makes a more modest claim than Empson. In her opinion, Shakespeare's images 'reveal the furniture of his mind' and 'the channels of his thought' — a proposition which does not immediately touch us here. So far as the plays are concerned, the function of the imagery is that it serves as 'background and undertone' to Shakespeare's art. Shakespeare's images are not scattered and haphazard; most of the plays — especially the comedies and the tragedies — contain '*recurrent* images' which assist 'in raising and sustaining emotion, in providing atmosphere or in emphasizing a theme'. In the comedies, the imagery serves mostly to give atmosphere and background, but in the tragedies it is more intimately connected with the main theme which it symbolizes, being like a recurrent 'motif' in a fugue or sonata; it reveals the dominant picture or sensation in terms of which Shakespeare feels and sees the main problem of the play.[29]

Although poetry is written with words, yet words are not poetry. That is to say, it is the significance that the poet wants to convey which is the primary thing; it is this significance which is expressed — or 'copied'

or 'completed' — in words and images. If, therefore, images are taken as part of the expressive medium, as 'undertones' or 'overtones' to the dramatic significance of Shakespeare's plays, there can be no objection to such a view and Caroline Spurgeon's analyses are useful aids to understanding. But if it is claimed that imagery exhausts the significance of a comedy or a tragedy or that a particular image reveals the dominant idea or emotion of a play, it will be narrowing down and distorting the complex meaning of creative art. The imagery — of the 'moon' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or of the 'dog' in *Timon of Athens* — is relatively important in a simple play where there is not much subtlety or intricacy, but here, too, we cannot say that the influence of the moon gives a very important clue to an understanding of Bottom and his men unless we hold that they are all 'moon'-struck, and even then we have to admit that Bottom's character is labelled rather than explored. When we come to complex plays with many strands of meaning, imagery, if seen by itself, may supply a misleading basis of judgement. Spurgeon's view that in *Macbeth* we have the picture of a small, ignoble man encumbered and degraded by garments unsuited to him is doubly misconceived. A man wearing ill-fitting garments is a ridiculous, not a tragic figure. Secondly, garments are external vesture, but the forces of evil are inside Macbeth's own soul and his smallness and ignobility are inextricably mixed up with his magnificence, his courage and his ambition. *Hamlet* does,

indeed, underline the idea of sickness and there are many references to the unwholesome condition of Denmark. It is also part of Hamlet's tragedy that he thinks it his duty to set about putting an end to this *rottenness*. But the sense of foulness and corruption is as much emphasized in *Measure for Measure* as in *Hamlet*, and insistence on imagery alone will give an imperfect understanding of the difference in the significance of the two plays. On a reference to chart vii in Spurgeon's *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells us* we find that there are six images of sickness, disease and medicine in *Measure for Measure* as against twenty in *Hamlet*, although Vienna is not less rotten than Denmark. Confining ourselves to *Hamlet*, the emphasis on pictorial imagery minimizes, as Caroline Spurgeon also admits, the importance of the problem of individual will, which is such an important element in the tragedy of the Prince of Denmark.[30]

Wilson Knight is an imaginative interpreter rather than a scientific analyst of images, but as he includes verbal symbols and metaphors as an aid to 'spatial' criticism, his method calls for a passing comment here. Wilson Knight's interpretation seeks to find the pattern below the level of plot and character in Shakespearian drama and to 'reveal that burning core of mental or spiritual reality from which each play derives its nature and meaning'.[31] Each play is, for him, a visionary unit bound to obey its own self-imposed laws. It is also an expanded metaphor by means of which the original vision has been projected, and interpretation must not

only analyse the meaning of direct poetic symbolism but also explore the minor symbolic imagery. It is the last point which is relevant to the present discussion. Assuming that there is a poetic idea below the level of character and plot, how far is it bodied forth in the verbal imagery which, Wilson Knight thinks, is worked out in the plays with great consistency? This 'principle' of interpretation is elaborated in *The Shakespearian Tempest*, where he shows that in every play there is discord and conflict which is resolved in order and harmony and that this opposition is reflected in images of 'tempest' and 'music'. Thus 'in *Lear* the essence is to be considered the tempest, not the "character" of the protagonist. So throughout Shakespeare. The poet's intuitions of conflict and disorder, and, again, of concord and love, are ultimate. Seeking expression, he gives them one form after another, comic or tragic, historical or pastoral. But they remain ultimate: tempests and music opposed or interwoven.'[32]

There are grave dangers in seeking the principle of unity in one particular image or symbol and Wilson Knight's interpretation does not escape them. Such a view of Shakespeare is both too wide and too narrow. It blurs the distinction between one play and another, between the tragedies and the comedies. It lays unnecessary emphasis on the tragic element or the 'tempests' in the comedies, and greater affinity is found between Shakespeare's early and late work than can be reasonably assumed.[33] It has besides a tendency to lay too much stress on what the critic regards as tempestuous or musical,

and a forced interpretation is put upon many passages so that they may fit into the Procrustean pattern. When not only seasonal changes but even human qualities and animals are taken as indicative of the tempest—music opposition, criticism seems to lose its significance and value. But in spite of the very wide meaning given to the 'tempest' image, *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to fall outside the scheme, and Wilson Knight finds the peculiar quality of this play in the absence of tempests. 'For once, in a human tragedy,' he says, 'tempests are stilled and music sounds over the tranquil waters of existence.' It is difficult to accept the view that there is 'little tragedy' in *Antony and Cleopatra* and that the turbulence of mortality's warring is here subdued to a newer and stronger harmony than in the other great tragedies.[34] Wilson Knight is led to make such criticisms only because he forgets that imagery is an instrument and not an ultimate.

VII

E. M. W. Tillyard examines 'statements' and comes to the conclusion that greatness in poetry depends on obliquity. There can be two kinds of statement — direct and oblique — of the same subject. The picture of Auburn in *The Deserted Village* and Blake's *The Echoing Green* both refer to village greens, but as poems they are different, this difference being due not to any difference in subject-matter or idea but to the method of expression. Goldsmith is direct and Blake is oblique. Direct expres-

sion need not be defined in detail; it is the same thing as statement. Obliquity is attained when the poet — through plot, character words, rhythm etc. — implies something beyond what is merely stated.

Although Tillyard recognizes the importance of direct expression, he holds that greatness in poetry depends on obliquity. Poetry, according to him, is an expression of the great commonplaces of life, of our primal ideas of joy and sorrow. Indeed, the *Iliad*, although it contains grand descriptions and the stories of mighty gods and god-like men, is great poetry only because it gives powerful expression to the commonplace idea that 'in the utmost extremities the things that unite men are stronger than those that divide them'.[35] It is easy to state these ideas directly. But such expression would not be poetic, because these ideas have their roots in primal joy and melancholy and evolve through a complicated history; 'there plainly can be no direct statement of something which is behind the most powerful human passions and which antedates human speech'.[36] Tillyard is opposed to what he himself describes as 'the "character" criticism of the nineteenth century', which assumes that portraiture of passions constituting character is the ultimate end of poetry.

The poet is a man of unusual sensibility and he re-lives the great commonplaces which are the subject-matter of his poetry. It is the wide range of his experience and the depth of his emotion which make his expression unique. If he expresses his emotions directly by their

symptoms, it would lead to a 'cheapening' of his sensibility. Directness, Tillyard argues, would be ruled out if the problem is looked at from the opposite angle. The supreme commonplaces are great social truths and 'with these the poetry of statement cannot adequately cope', for they have to be 'lived' or re-lived from the beginning. The poetry of statement may recapitulate the existing forms of the great commonplaces or some small commonplaces may pass into it. But great poetry is an immediate, concrete rendering of an idea and such immediate apprehension cannot be stated but can only be embodied. Statement is abstract, obliquity is concrete; statement repeats established commonplaces, obliquity proceeds from transforming personal experience. But the great commonplaces must be preserved in the form of statement before the poet can re-create them in his own way; in other words, the poetry of statement is the basis on which to build the best obliquity.

The theory of obliquity has been elaborately worked out in Indian aesthetics and will be discussed in the next chapter. It will suffice here to point out the limitations of Tillyard's exposition. In Tillyard's view it is the great commonplace that is the subject of great poetry, and the small commonplace may pass into the second-rate poetry of statement. But he has not been able to say why Blake's commonplaces are great and Browning's are not. Nor can he adequately explain why a great commonplace demands obliquity of expression. He says that the poet must make the great commonplace his own and that it

must be spread through all the parts of a poem; 'it must be powerfully and consistently dominant'. But this is true of all good poetry, direct as well as oblique, of great commonplaces as well as of small if these are to be creatively embodied. If immediacy be the only or the chief ground for the poet's preference for the oblique, it seems that a direct statement should be a suitable vehicle for what is directly or immediately felt. Another ground seems to be that the great commonplaces have to be lived or re-lived from the beginning, but even then it seems inexplicable why direct statement should be unsuitable for the expression of such experience. It is on account of these fundamental misconceptions that Tillyard's classifications seem to be very puzzling. For example, why should Wordsworth's *The Prelude* be regarded as poetry of statement?[37] It is easy to see that Shirley's poem — *The Glories of our Blood and State* — lacks obliquity, but Tillyard's argument that *The Sick Rose* of Blake is an oblique symbol and not a direct statement smacks of special pleading. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in Tillyard's view a poem that appeals to us is oblique and a poem one dislikes is direct.

CHAPTER VIII

Indian Aesthetics: The Theory of Dhvani

I

INDIAN aesthetics has a long tradition and various branches. Of the many schools of thought the most important is that of *Dhvani*, which more or less superseded its rivals because it offered an interpretation which included the elements emphasized by them and gave them a new orientation. The founder of the school is Ānandavardhana, who is mentioned as adorning the court of king Avantivarman who reigned in Kaśmīr from A.D. 855 to A.D. 884. His great work *Dhvanyāloka* (*The Light of Dhvani*) consists of certain verse-theorems followed by prose elucidation. There are some who have offered the suggestion that the verse theorems are by an earlier author and that Ānandavardhana is the author of the prose elucidation alone. As the two portions have an unbroken unity and as tradition assigns both of them to Ānandavardhana, the suggestion of divided authorship does not seem to be tenable. Ānandavardhana's work acquired early celebrity and provoked a large number of commentaries, the most famous of these being the *Locana* written by another Kaśmīrian, the great Abhinavagupta, who lived towards the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh. He was an erudite scholar and a leading exponent of

Śaivism (a system of Vedantic philosophy) and also of the *Dhvani* theory of aesthetics. All writers refer to him with great reverence and it may be said that it was his powerful exposition of the *Dhvani* theory that established it as the most widely accepted theory of poetry. The following account, presented as far as possible in non-technical language, gives a mere sketch of a complicated doctrine argued by the masters with great subtlety against a background of epistemology and metaphysics, and it seeks to give a bare outline of only those aspects which are of universal appeal. Wherever Indian aesthetics is mentioned without any qualification, the reference is to the *Dhvani* school, but it must not be forgotten that all writers do not give obliquity of meaning that importance which Ānandavardhana and his followers do and that there are some writers who do not recognize it at all.

Ogden and Richards point out subtle speech-situations in which more than one meaning is conveyed by words. They draw attention to those situations in which the speaker intends one meaning but the words seem to convey another, and give examples of some kinds of deception. Let us examine the following adjuration addressed by a woman to a hermit:

'O hermit, you can now safely wander along the banks of the *Godāvari*. The dog who infested the leafy bowers on the banks has been killed by a ferocious lion.' Here the speaker apparently directs the timid hermit (who was afraid of the dog) to roam freely, but by draw-

ing his attention to the presence of the ferocious lion, she really wants him to desist from going there. For a man who was occasionally held back by fear of a dog the prospect of meeting an irate lion would be a permanent deterrent. Why does the speaker take to this roundabout way of preventing him instead of telling him quite plainly that he should not go there? She has a secret desire which she cannot, out of womanly bashfulness and for other reasons, express in clear, unambiguous language. The reference to the leafy bower which screens from view is a pointer to her intended meaning. This bower on the bank of the river is her secret trysting place where she meets her lover away from the gaze of others. But the hermit, ignorant of the ways of the world, would go there in search of flowers and fruits and disturb their meetings, and she spreads the canard of the non-existent lion in order to scare away the simple-minded hermit. This is her intended meaning which is the exact opposite of the direct primary sense conveyed by the words.[2*]

From the above analysis, it appears that words may have two senses: the primary or direct sense and the secondary or oblique sense. Poetic beauty lies in the predominance of the latter over the former. It is necessary before proceeding to a further elaboration of Indian aesthetics to point out its lines of divergence from

* This is a very simple example. In the best poetry, the oblique meaning has an existence independent of the speaker's or even the poet's intention.

Empson's theory of ambiguity or Tillyard's theory of directness and obliquity. The woman in the lines quoted above makes an ambiguous statement, but there is no ambiguity in her intended sense. Poetry is not in the ambiguity of language but in that state of her soul which makes her resort to ambiguity; ambiguity here is an instrument and not an 'ultimate'. Tillyard thinks that there is no fundamental difference between a direct statement and an oblique statement, there being only degrees of obliquity. But when he analyses poetry, the two seem to fall far apart, and it is difficult, in spite of Tillyard's assurance, to realize how directness can serve as the solid basis of obliquity. On the Indian view, every poetical statement has a direct meaning, and it is the direct meaning which projects an oblique meaning. This also cuts at the root of Tillyard's theory of immediacy,[3] for it is only through the mediation of the direct statement that the oblique or projected meaning may be arrived at. The interval may be so slight as to be scarcely perceptible, but it is always there; the direct statement is the basis on which obliquity rests.

The direct meaning is transcended, but it is not altogether superseded by the projected oblique meaning. It remains inside the projected meaning, which is sustained and enriched by it. For example, in the verse quoted above, the speaker's desire to conceal her real intention would be lost if she asked the hermit straightway to desist from visiting the bank of the *Godavari*. A large part of the beauty of the verse is derived from the inter-

relatedness of the two meanings and the subordination of one of the meanings to the other. It may be mentioned here that Indian aesthetics lays emphasis on the meaning of words as the chief constituent of poetry, thus differing from many European writers on aesthetics, who, following Schopenhauer,[4] hold that all the arts aim at the condition of music in which the content is merged in the form. But we must not forget that in music sounds which have no direct meaning convey their appeal immediately whereas in poetry there is the mediation of the meanings of words which combine to constitute the import of a sentence. Since the meanings of words and sentences can never be slurred over, poetry on this view can never approach the condition of music without losing its distinctiveness.

II

Let us now consider some other examples in which the oblique meaning supervenes upon the direct. Common puns are to be excluded, because when one word means two different things, we really have two different words, and one cannot say that one of the meanings projects the other. But we may consider the following sentence:

'In the meantime the Season of Flowers came to an end and there appeared in its wake that Great Season which is called Summer; as it opened itself out, white

mallikā flowers bloomed and the God of the Seasons seemed to be smiling in glee.'[5]

The verbal nuances which are lost in translation have to be brought out in a commentary. *Mahākāla* in Sanskrit means a great season, but it may also mean Lord Śiva who presides over the Hours and represents the principle of Destruction in the Holy Trinity in Hindu theology. Here there is no verbal quibble, for Lord Śiva is called *Mahākāla* just because Time (or Kāla) is the Great Destroyer, and this is a well-known epithet of the God. So although the sentence quoted is a description of the advent of summer and this meaning is never lost sight of, it suggests and re-inforces another meaning: It is not merely that one season leads to another, but behind life, symbolized by flowers, there is the smile of Death.

This mixture of directness and obliquity which, according to Indian aesthetics, is at the root of all poetry may be aptly illustrated from the second stanza of Keats's *Ode to Autumn.* Here we have a detailed description of Autumn through a recital of the operations of the harvest and the vintage. But the manner of the address, the references to watching, reaping etc. as also to soft-lifted hair evoke a human spirit to whom the season owes its beauty and many-sided activity. It is to be noticed that although the description of the seasonal operations is never obscured, yet it is subordinate to the oblique meaning — the personification of Autumn, which is projected by it.

In India girls are married early, bridegrooms are selec-

ted by their guardians, and the reactions of coy maidens may be expressed in the following verse:

'When there is talk of a bridegroom, maidens hold their head down in bashfulness but there is a perceptible thrill in their bodies, which indicates their pleasure at listening to such conversation.'[6]

Here the idea is expressed directly and the poetic value of such a verse is negligible. The same idea is conveyed obliquely by Kālidāsa in his great poem *Kumārasambhavam*. Himālaya, who is regarded as a sentient being in Indian mythology, is the father of Pārvati, who would be the mother of Kārtika, the Indian Mars. Sage Angirā comes to Himālaya and makes the proposal of a marriage between Pārvatī and Lord Śiva.

'As the sage made this proposal, Pārvatī, who was sitting beside her father, hung her head down and began silently counting the leaves of a lotus.'[7]

Her apparent absorption in a trivial occupation is suggestive of her rapture at the prospect of being married to the great God. These lines are poetical, because the maiden's emotion is obliquely expressed instead of being directly stated. Here is a more complex example of obliquity:

'The young man who took away my maidenhead is bright as ever; the nights of spring are what they used to be; the love-sick winds of the *Kadamba* forest, laden with the scent of *Mālatī* flowers, are languid as of old, and I too am what I was. Yet my mind, haunted by amorous thoughts, wanders restlessly in the shades of the *betas* trees on the banks of the river *Revā*.'[8] What

the poem obliquely expresses through a reference to vernal nights, the banks of the *Revā*, the *Kadamba* forest and especially through the iterated emphasis on the demonstrative adjective — 'that', 'those'* — is that she would no longer be able to recapture the first fine careless rapture of those nights when he came serenading and she surrendered her virginity.

The oblique meaning must not only be present in good poetry but must also be the dominant meaning. If it is only an adornment of the direct meaning, it is no longer first-rate poetry. A poet thus describes the advent of evening:

'The flushed moon so grasped the forepart (the Sanskrit original means both 'face' and 'advent') of night who had starry and languidly-rolling eyes that in the excessive glow of sunset she failed to notice the parti-coloured skirt of darkness falling from her waist and spreading around.'[9]

This is too rhetorical to be good poetry. But what is important in the present context is that the description of nightfall is the direct meaning and that it is also the predominant meaning. The suggested comparison of the union of lovers to a meeting between the Moon conceived as the hero and the Night as the heroine is an unimportant undertone. Whatever poetic beauty there is in the lines — there is not much — is derived from the direct meaning and not from the oblique suggestion which is not there in its own right.

* In the English translation the definite article is substituted for the demonstrative adjective.

There is on the Indian view a very intimate connexion between direct and oblique meanings, and this is expressed through a succession of images. The direct meaning is the basis of the oblique; it is the means by which the latter is obtained. Just as the man who wants illumination pays attention to the lamp so also if you want the oblique meaning you must first of all attend to the direct. Just as it is through the meaning of words that we can arrive at the sense of a sentence so also the direct meaning is the way that leads to the oblique.[10] The relation may, indeed, be said to be deeper than what exists between means and ends or between the foundation and the superstructure. A handsome woman has beautiful features—dark eyes, luxuriant hair or fair complexion, but these features project an ineffable loveliness which is beyond mere sharpness of the nose or the colour of the eyelashes. It is this loveliness or grace to which the oblique meaning can be compared, or we may say that the direct meaning is the body and the oblique meaning is like the soul. Why, it may be asked, is the oblique meaning called *dhvani*, which means sound? This takes us to the technical terminology of Indian grammar with which we are not immediately concerned here. The idea is that as soon as a word is uttered, there is a stream of sounds like that which is caused by the pealing of bells, and it is only the last wave of the stream that strikes the ears of the hearer; it is more important than its predecessors and is, therefore, an apt symbol for the oblique meaning which dominates the direct statement that produces it.[11]

III

There are more reasons than one why the poet should express himself obliquely rather than directly. Ānandavardhana, the chief exponent of the theory of *Dhvani*, says that words have a fixed meaning attached to them by usage. It is this meaning which clings to them as a permanent label and is employed in the transactions of daily life, in history, science and philosophy. We know that even if a philosopher uses a particular word in a special sense, he sticks to it and cannot depart from it except at his own peril. The scientist or the historian or the philosopher or the man of the world wants to express or prove something, but beyond this his words do not express any personal connotation. If convention has it that the beams of the moon are cold, he has to accept it and cannot say that moonbeams burn. But the poet who always expresses a personal view of things must impart his own meanings into words and say that a lover separated from his ladylove is scalded by the burning rays of the moon. But in order to get his full effect out of words, he must take note of the convention. There would be no point in referring to scalding moonbeams unless this meaning could be contrasted with the soothing effect ascribed to them by common usage.

This gives us a clue to the relation between poetry and life and between poetry and other kinds of knowledge, such as science, history, and philosophy. These are like the body of poetry of which the oblique meaning

is the soul, and just as there is no soul without the body, so poetry would vanish if there were no history or science, if there were no reality which poetry might be called upon to transform. These are the elements or constituents out of which poetry is made just as the flame is made by oil and the wick. But here the analogy partly ceases. The quality of the flame is determined by the constituent elements, because it is a physical substance. But the poet's imagination is not determined by 'history', that is to say, by the facts or theories that stimulate his imagination and supply him with raw materials. Take any historical or mythological drama, for example. The facts are well-known; the dramatist does not claim to bring forward any new evidence but he transforms the facts by selecting and rejecting whatever he likes to select or reject and even by adding to them if his imagination demands it. Or we may look at the problem from yet another point of view. A historian or a scientist supersedes his predecessors not by telling an old tale but by adding to the information hitherto available. In so far as his presentation is original, he is an artist besides being a historian or a scientist. But in poetry and literature we can claim to be original by simply putting old wine into new bottles. There are many dramas based on the lives of Caesar and Antony, but each of them is original only by virtue of the new meanings read into the common materials. It has already been shown how two verses on the same theme — the bashful delightedness of girls listening to talk about marriage — may be

expressed in widely divergent ways. Indeed, most poems and dramas in Sanskrit literature are based on stories in the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, and most Athenian tragedies are indebted to Homer. So if one once concedes that there is a single poet after the authors of these epics, one has to admit that genius can be expressed in an infinite variety of ways, and every poet is different from others primarily because he has his own way of looking at things. One meaning resembles another meaning only in so far as one human figure resembles another. This should not, however, be construed to mean that poetical genius acts erratically or that it is absolutely independent of all factors outside it. It has been already said that the direct meaning is the means through which obliquity is obtained, and the end can never be totally dissociated from the means. Meanings, it must not be forgotten, are partly controlled by local and temporal conditions et cetera, and this et cetera is a comprehensive category. It includes moral ideas, for example, because they have a regulating, if not a totally dominating effect, on the poet's genius. There is no end of poems of love but poets do not treat of the amorous embraces of their parents, and many critics have objected to Kālidāsa's portraying the amours of Śiva and Pārvatī who, being gods, are as parents of the human race. Although these critics have not been able to prevent other people from enjoying the rich poetry of *Kumārasambhavam*, yet the point is worth considering in all its implications. Either we who enjoy the poem, and Kālidāsa who wrote it, have not this

inhibition or we — readers and the poet alike — do not look upon Śiva and Pārvatī as anything more than human lovers. But the mere fact that some have put forward this objection and also the paucity of poems portraying this theme indicate that poetry is not independent of moral convention. And that is admitting a great deal. There are indefinable laws of propriety which are outside poetry but which poets must respect even if they want to improve on them. Indian aesthetics proceeds a step further and says that not only does the meaning of poetry depend on local and temporal conditions but it is not without its influence on them, on things that are outside poetry. Poetry not only depends on moral and other conventions but also creates them. The image of the flame which is constantly invoked by these writers will help to elucidate the relation that poetry has to life. If a lamp is lighted in a dark room it not only discovers itself but helps us to see everything else that is inside the room. Similarly the oblique meaning which is the soul of poetry not only reveals itself but also illuminates life. If we read Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, not only do we appreciate the Antony and the Cleopatra we find in the drama, but this appreciation also knits us to life, because we get here a vivid portraiture of the emotional and moral problems that assail us.

IV

The Indian theory of *Dhvani* is closely associated with the theatre and dramatic composition and we must go to

its origins if we are to understand its full implications. Early drama had its roots in mythology or epic poetry, and it seems that theatrical performances mostly represented incidents in the life of Rāma. Indian aesthetics tried to explore the significance of the beauty of these representations of a well-known theme. What is the source of aesthetic delight? Is it the story of Rāma (the subject-matter) and not anything in the representation? Many arguments have been advanced against the theory that beauty lies in any quality of the theme, only one or two of which need be mentioned here. On such a theory art becomes only an approximation to life, an imitation or a mere shadow. If art is a mere copy of life, if the excellence of the theme alone were the source of aesthetic beauty, then one could never find any delight in witnessing a tragedy. In real life we are pained by tragic incidents but we appreciate repeated performances of a tragedy. Are we then to suppose that this is due to any beauty in the actors representing Rāma and Sitā? As they only 'imitate' what is outside them, their function seems to be mechanical and artificial. The actors, however, project something that is beyond them, something which is in the writer and the appreciative audience and may be also in them in so far as they realize it within themselves. They not merely recite verses written for them but also perform actions and indulge in gestures and postures. All these combine to evoke a meaning that is as much beyond any individual actor as it is beyond the mere theme. It is this total meaning in which all

may share which is the source of aesthetic beauty, and its untranslatable name is *rasa*, of which a particular actor is only a temporary embodiment.

Before knowing what *rasa* is we should be sure about what it is not. Its first and most important feature is that it is not like anything in real life; it is in this sense transcendental, un-earthly (*alaukika*). Emotions are expressed in real life, and they are portrayed in art but there is this difference that in real life they are like a stream; they flow in and flow out and some emotions like anger, wonder and sorrow become attenuated with time. But an aesthetic emotion is stable and not subject to any temporal change. That is why the poetry in the Rāma of the *Rāmāyana* has nothing to do with the Rāma of real life, because the emotions they evoke are different. That, again, is the reason why *rasa* is said to be enjoyed, relished or tasted rather than produced or created, for whatever is created is liable to decay and death. Yet another reason why the world of art is different from the real world is that in the latter an emotion always leads to action: we weep when we are sorry, recoil when we are disgusted, and hurt our enemy when we are angry. But in art there is no action, not even 'the incipient and imaginal action' posited by some European writers. If art were like life, we would weep over rather than commemorate a tragic incident.

The difference in this respect between art and life may be probed more deeply. All that happens in the practical world either touches us or does not touch us.

If it does not touch us, we are indifferent, we do not care for what is happening to people in whom we are not interested. If it touches us, it will arouse certain reactions which will be in the form of impulses to action, whether developed or latent. But art is pure enjoyment or contemplation. In the first act of Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* there is a magnificent description of a deer flying for life as soon as it sees the king entering the hermitage where it has been living in full security. The beauty of the description is, indeed, derived from the representation of fear, but whose fear? one might ask. If it is only the alarm of the deer we should have nothing to do with it and should stand unmoved. If the fear is ours, that is, of the poet and his readers and his audience, we would run away like the deer or at least feel perplexed and should experience an 'incipient and imaginal impulse' to flight. But we have no such tremor and that is because we are neither interested nor disinterested. We are with the deer and yet away from it. This is the artistic emotion to which nothing in real life can be likened. Such emotion is not produced as ordinary emotions are produced nor does it decay like them. Neither can it be proved as propositions in logic or philosophy are proved. The only ground for accepting it is that it is experienced. It may make use of scientific or logical propositions, but it is fundamentally different from them.[12]

The impersonality of art means that the central thing in it is neither any character nor any incident nor even any peculiarity of technique but the aesthetic emotion

which inheres in and is independent of them. But to say that an aesthetic emotion is *sui generis* does not mean that it is unrelated to life. Aesthetic emotions are the same emotions that we feel in real life and that is one of the links binding art to life. Only they suffer a change as they pass through the transforming process of art. The basic emotions are nine in number: Love, Laughter, Sorrow, Courage, Fear, Disgust, Wonder, Anger and Renunciation. Some of them, it will be seen, are more intellectual than others. Love and anger are impulses, but disgust is not always an instinctive impulse, and the feeling of renunciation is accompanied and often aroused by an intellectual judgement on the worthlessness of life. Indian aesthetics, it should be remembered, does not state whether these primary *bhāvas* are pure emotions or ideas, whether these feelings have any intellectual element in them. These primary, permanent emotions are sustained by and express themselves in certain subsidiary emotions such as anxiety, remorse, etc. They produce, too, certain effects such as lassitude and thrill, and the principal feature of these subsidiaries and effects is that whereas the pure emotion is unseen, these latter are manifest to the eye so that when we see before our eyes men (actors) in whom these subsidiaries and effects are prominently displayed and also know by what these are stimulated, we can in this oblique manner trace our way to the primary emotion which is otherwise incommunicable. This realization is what is called the enjoyment of *rasa*, and it is in this sense that poetry is creative.

V

What, it may be asked, has the oblique meaning of words got to do with the relishing of *rasa* or the enjoyment of aesthetic beauty? Confining our attention to theatrical representation alone, we find that the actors seldom express the primary emotion directly. The hero does not ordinarily say plainly that he loves the heroine; even if he says so, he would try to support his direct statement with expressions of subsidiary emotions or through other external manifestations which would leave no room for doubt about the genuineness of his emotion. Obviously the direct statement is unsuitable for aesthetic expression. Sometimes, again, the total meaning that is finally conveyed is the opposite of what is expressed by single speeches and acts. Hamlet plans to murder his uncle, and in the course of the play he seems to be absorbed in contriving this murder; what he does accomplish is fatally to stab Polonius, to send his old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths and only at last to kill his uncle. But the total meaning of the play is not so much his action as his inaction. He expresses this inability occasionally, but this direct statement is subordinate to the oblique meaning conveyed by his confused plans and sudden spurts of action. The epic *Māhābharata* narrates many mighty incidents, but its total meaning is renunciation, the attainment of bliss in God.

If such be the meaning of poetry — epic, narrative, dramatic or lyrical — it is clear that plot and character

have no finality of their own. They are only means to the realization of particular *rasas*; the total meaning embraces them but is also beyond them. For example, king Dushyanta in Kālidāsa's drama is not to be understood as an individual king but as a means to the expression of the erotic state of the soul, of *Sringāra rasa*. When the *rasa* is realized, it is enjoyed equally by the poet and the reader, that is to say, it is partly independent of the former. When a poet begins to write a poem, he starts with some ideas which are the basis of the meaning he intends, but the meaning conveyed may be and often is different from the intended meaning, so that borrowing a phrase from Shaw, we can say that the poet has no more control over his meaning than he has over his wife. In Indian mythology the origin of poetry is traced to a singular experience of the sage Vālmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*. He saw a hunter killing one of a pair of *krauncha* birds, and when he heard the female bird crying in sorrow, the following verse burst forth from his lips: 'Oh thou cruel hunter, may thou never attain any celebrity till eternity, for thou hast killed one out of a loving couple.' Legend has it that the verse came forth spontaneously, and critics hold that even the emotion, in so far as it is embodied in poetry, is not the poet's personal emotion. Abhinavagupta says that although the poet deeply feels the emotion or idea, it does not remain confined within him. Borrowing a homely analogy, he compares it to water that has overflowed out of a brimming pot.[13] If the poet had felt sorrow as something

personal, he would not have been able to compose poetry; he would have lacked the necessary detachment. It is only when an emotion transcends the limitations of a personal 'affect' that it can be enjoyed as an aesthetic state. That is why the poetic meaning of a passage has often an existence independent of the one intended by the speaker.

But although the meaning conveyed in poetry is so different from meanings employed in history or science or in everyday life, it has nevertheless no other medium except the words and meanings used in these contexts. It cannot too often be reiterated that poetry grows out of life, for the poetic emotion is only an ordinary emotion felt so keenly that it bursts its confines. That is why the poet adopts the medium of ordinary words but his poetic power and the necessities of aesthetic expression — the two mean the same thing — endow them with a new significance. There are some — especially the philosophers of the *Mimāmsa* school — who do not concede this power to words. Anxious to prove the divine authority of the Vedas, they argue that words have fixed connotations, and although there is difference about the application of these connotations, they agree that the meanings of words are unchanging and there can be no secondary meaning beyond the primary connotations of words. Leaving the theological controversy about the divine authority of the Vedic texts out of consideration for the present, we may say that there is no doubt about the suggestive potentiality of words, no

doubt that words acquire new significance in new contexts.* What is more interesting is that such meanings, although they are introduced by the poet, acquire an independent existence, and it seems that the poet half discovers and half creates his meanings. Sometimes the meanings are opposed to the plain sense of words as in the verse about the woman who scares away the hermit who disturbs her tryst or it may follow the plain sense as in the description of young Pārvatī counting the leaves of a lotus, but the point is that everywhere in good poetry the suggested meaning is different from the manifest primary meaning from which it is projected. This projected meaning flashes on the mind after the manifest surface meaning has done its work; the interval is so slight that it is not often perceptible, but it is always there, and the primary meaning continues to be relished along with the one it projects. It is this projected meaning or *dhvani* which is the soul of poetry and the source of *rasa*.

What is the place of stylistic devices, including rhetorical figures, in the making of the oblique meaning? Those who believe in the existence of *dhvani* assign a subordinate place to technical devices, pointing out that they must be a part of the meaning projected and should have no value of their own. The criterion for judging the excellence of rhetorical figures — and of other devices

* Indeed, even in the orthodox view one difference between the Vedic texts and ordinary words is that the former have an immutability which human speech cannot claim.

— is whether they are part of the original inspiration, whether they have been called forth in the very act of finding the meaning or whether a second effort was necessary for thinking them out. If they are thought out after the evocation of the meaning, they will be external decorations, like the ornaments a woman puts on and takes off at pleasure; they will have nothing to do with the nameless grace or loveliness projected forth by her features.

VI

It would be improper for an Indian to make extravagant claims on behalf of Indian critics, but even the very brief sketch given above will show that Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta have supplied very suggestive clues to a solution of the fundamental problems of aesthetics. It is necessary here to point out certain limitations for which the theory of *Dhvani* cannot be accepted as final. The first point to note is that these writers have not been able to give a satisfactory account of the relationship between the two aspects of meaning. If the oblique meaning depends on the direct as the superstructure depends on the foundation, as the effect on the cause, or as ends on means, then the latter must have a regulating effect on the poem and *rasa* cannot be as unearthly as Indian aesthetics may lead one to think. If, on the other hand, poetry is derived from the projected meaning alone, why is the foundation of the primary meaning necessary at all? It seems that there is a contradiction between these

two notions — the dependence of the oblique meaning on the direct and the transcendental, unearthly character of the former; and indeed, of the two writers, Ānandavardhana lays greater emphasis on the link with the direct meaning and Abhinavagupta on the alienness of obliquity. A recent disciple of Abhinava says that the connexion between direct and oblique meanings is like that between the roots of a tree and its fruits; there can be no fruits if the tree has no roots, but who except a madman will say that the value of the fruits of a tree depends on its roots? This analogy does not hold good, because the masters themselves — particularly Ānandavardhana — say that the direct meaning is not separable from the oblique, neither is it completely submerged in what it projects, for it continues to be appreciated along with the oblique meaning. A more appropriate analogy is that of the grace or loveliness proceeding from a woman's beautiful features. It is not merely that of the two meanings, one depends for its existence on the other, but the connexion between the two is so intimate that the value of the effect depends in part on the value of the cause.

Bhattanāyaka, who seems to have been a contemporary of Abhinavagupta, objects to the means-and-ends concept on the ground that if the oblique meaning depends in this manner on the direct or the un-earthly *rasa* on constituent human emotions, then the more a person cultivates the means, the better he will achieve the end. This means that to be a poet or an appreciative reader,

he should first educate himself in the nine principal sentiments (named on p. 184) with their subsidiaries; with the help of Shakespearian examples, we may say that he should be ambitious like Macbeth, jealous like Othello, villainous like Iago and lustful like Cleopatra. This is reducing the means-and-ends theorem to absurdity.[14]

Bhattanāyaka's objection falls to the ground if we remember the transcendental, un-earthly character of *rasa*. Here worldly emotions and ideas are, indeed, used as means, but it is the unique capacity of the imagination that it transfers everything earthly into a world of its own. Our objection to this theory is based on entirely different considerations. Every poet has certain intellectual ideas and moral or religious convictions which enter into the creation or expression of *rasas* and it is these which in part regulate what we call the form of a work of art. That Indian aesthetics was alive to the influence of the intellectual content is clear from the specific directions it laid about the moral and other qualities to be expected of the hero or the heroine, say, of an epic. These specifications appear to be unacceptable, because being too precise they leave little freedom to the genius of the individual artist, a consequence presumably of the independent existence ascribed to the several *rasas* and their sub-divisions. What the ancient masters failed to note is that every work of art demands its own unique form which is directed though not wholly determined by the attitude taken up by the artist to the intellectual, moral

or social problems that constitute the theme of art. The story of *Troilus and Cressida* is told by both Chaucer and Shakespeare, but the difference between their works is not merely verbal or formal but one of moral and intellectual attitude which is partly responsible for the divergent ways in which they tell an old tale.

Another reason why Indian aesthetics leaves a sense of dissatisfaction is that it makes all values quantitative. Making *rasas* or aesthetic emotions the central point of creation and realization, it sub-divides them into smaller classes and these again are further sub-divided, by an intricate process of permutation and combination, with reference to the subsidiary emotions and their manifestations and the various stylistic devices adopted by poets or prescribed by rhetoricians. Love alone, it is said, is of two kinds — love in union and love in separation, and each of these sub-classes has many forms of manifestation, and if we proceed to note all the ramifications of one single *rasa*, we shall, confesses Ānandavardhana, reach infinity, and he gives up the attempt in despair. But this absurdity is unavoidable if we credit a *rasa* with an independent existence and fail to set up qualitative standards of value. It is, indeed, true that there are certain predominant emotions like love or anger and that they are variously manifested. But trying to count and classify them will be like classifying the sands of the seas, and this tremendous labour will not take us a step forward in the realization of a *rasa* unless we are able to arrive at standards to which all successful expression must conform. Every

emotion acquires value not by virtue of its many subsidiaries and effects but because of its quality, its intensity, subtlety, complexity, intellectual affiliations, everything in short that gives proof of a unique personality. It may be the personality of a great man like Shaw's Julius Caesar or of a little woman like Flaubert's Madame Bovary, but it is this personality that gives distinction to the *bhāva* or emotion. It is the defect of the Indian theory of aesthetics that in giving primacy to a *rasa*, it minimizes the importance of the person who embodies it, or in other words, it forgets that *rasa* has not only to be relished but also to be valued.

PART TWO

CHAPTER IX

Some Paradoxes and Platitudes

I

ALL artistic activity presents us with something that is beautiful, and aesthetics is also called the philosophy of the Beautiful. But does art mean the creation of beauty? The sunset and the sea are beautiful, but they are not creations of art in the same sense as poetry and painting. Are we then to say that objects of nature are creations of an unseen artist, and human art achieves excellence only in so far as it holds the mirror up to nature? But everything in nature is not beautiful — a stagnant pool full of stench, for example; and if nature is to include the world of human activity, there is much in life that is ugly and loathsome. Strangely enough, although a stagnant pool may be an unpleasant sight, its re-creation in painting may be fascinating, and although murder is horrible, high tragedy is entrancing. This means that art transcends rather than reproduces nature, a conclusion which will be strengthened if we probe further into the character of aesthetic appeal. The beauty of nature is primarily sensuous, that is to say, although memory or intelligence may play a part in the appreciation of natural beauty, it must first be received by the senses. This is true in a large measure of the beauty of art too, for we see painting, architecture, sculpture and dancing and

we hear poetry and music. But it is significant that of the five senses, only hearing and seeing are concerned with the appreciation of art; artistic beauty cannot be tasted (except in a metaphorical sense) or touched or smelt. This may raise doubts whether beauty is, indeed, a concept applicable to art, at least whether the beauty of a work of art is the same as the beauty of a flower and whether for the appreciation of artistic activity another term, aesthetic emotion, for example, should not be substituted. But it cannot be denied that there is some affinity between the beauty of natural objects and the quality we seek or find in art, and it is because of this similarity that the creators of art generally try to reproduce their impressions of things that have struck them as beautiful in life and nature. Even when, as in the paintings of Picasso and some other artists, natural objects are distorted almost beyond recognition, there is an implied suggestion that these distorted portraits are truer visions of reality than mere representation would be. This shows that the beauty of art is not unrelated to the truth or beauty of life.

That art takes its subject-matter from life and nature not the sturdiest exponent of formalism would deny. But do life and nature enter into the creative process and determine the quality of imaginative products? Or, how far, if at all, are poetry and painting to be looked upon as representations of life and how far as deviations? This leads on to the problem of form and content. If we take content as meaning the raw materials of the artist's

experience, what part do these play in the final act of creation? The raw materials will mean not merely the things the artist sees and hears, his social and economic environment, but also his critical and philosophical ideas, everything, in short, which formative imagination works on and transforms. If these have anything to do with artistic activity, then it might be argued that the poet or the painter belongs fundamentally to the category of essayists and philosophers, and artists would be successful in so far as they give a correct picture or a correct philosophy of life. From this a propagandist might conclude that the less a man possesses the quality of imagination which transforms and distorts reality, the greater would he be as an artist, which is absurd. On the other hand, the cultivation of form alone does not make for creative activity. We look for meaning in a dream fantasy like *Kubla Khan*, and even a picture like Picasso's *Demoiselles d' Avignon* is not without human significance; instrumental music, which consists of sounds rather than of words, suggests words and evokes emotions. The cultivation of mere form would lead to formlessness; that is why exponents of the doctrine of art for art's sake would define art as *significant* form, oblivious of the fact that if the full connotation of the epithet 'significant' is borne in mind, it would mean that art is form that is rich in content.* We are back at our starting-point

*It may be argued that 'significant form' refers only to formal significance, to the relations of lines or colours in painting, for example. But the concept of form, by itself, involves these relations in the

and are left asking what exactly constitutes beauty in art or contributes to our aesthetic impression: content or form? Or if both these elements are to be regarded as necessary, what is their relative importance?

II

Art has its origin in the personal experiences of the artist and the form he imposes on them is individual, too. Both the artist's vision and his design are peculiar, and it is this touch of individuality that distinguishes art from science and philosophy, which formulate general truths or laws. Art may, therefore, be defined as the expression of personality. But if that were so, all persons would be artists, because we all express our personality in characteristic deeds, gestures and words. The argument that artistic activity is theoretical, — that it is unrelated to practical life, — is not free from objection. A politician's speeches are not poetry because they have an immediate reference to practical life, but so have the creations of many artists. Some people think that art has its origin in ritual; and religious art, whatever the form it takes, is eminently practical. Keeping religion out of consideration for the moment, we cannot say that great works of art and literature are unrelated to the world of practical activity. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which had such a deep

constituent materials, and if a purely formal view of art is advocated, the phrase 'significant form' becomes tautological. Significant form is no more pure form than 'imaginative reason' is mere image-making.

influence on anti-slavery agitation, may not be one of the greatest masterpieces in literature, but *Don Quixote*, which helped to kill knight-errantry, is. During the First World War, Robert Lynd remarked that 'the allies seemed to be fighting against a combination of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey and — George Bernard Shaw.[1] G. K. Chesterton says that the bad fable *has* a moral, and the good fable *is* a moral,[2] but what is immediately relevant to our purpose is that there is no fable without a moral.

It is difficult, therefore, to accept the contention that art and literature express only individual impressions or emotions and have very little to do with general reflexions. We have only to examine our aesthetic response to a play of Shakespeare's, *Hamlet* for example, and we shall find that much of our appreciation depends on general reflexions on men and things. When Lady Macbeth, who has been chastising her husband with the valour of her tongue on account of his supposed timidity, says that she could not murder the old man because of a superficial resemblance between him and her father, we rightly think that this remark is appropriate only in its context and that such a scruple cannot but occur to the particular woman who was Macbeth's wife, but when Hamlet says:

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

Or,

'Frailty, thy name is woman'

Or,

> 'Rightly to be great
> Is not to stir without great argument,
> But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
> When honour's at the stake.'

Or, 'if it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all; since no man has ought of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?' the point of the remarks does not consist merely in their appositeness in the immediate context, but in their universal applicability. It will not do to say that such universal applicability, which is testified to by the fact that they are often quoted, is no part of the aesthetic emotion proper, because if by a process of mental arithmetic, we deduct the force of these general statements from our aesthetic response, very little will remain that has any value. Indeed, when we enjoy a drama of Shakespeare, our enjoyment is constantly enriched by a feeling of the rightness and not merely the contextual appositeness of the more profound reflexions occurring there, and this is true, more or less, of all works of literature.

There are some critics who think that art is, indeed, the expression of some archetypal images that have become permanently embedded in the race. Poets, some people hold, realize the presence of a mind in themselves beyond their private minds, and it is through this mind that certain things, the red colour, for example, become universal symbols. Indeed, all artists express themselves

in symbols only because they want to step out of their private individual emotions and to give them an expressive form which will transcend what is merely personal, local, or momentary. This view of art is based on the hypothesis advanced by some psychologists that the emotional significance of many great poems reaches beyond the meanings conveyed by words to unconscious forces lying beneath the conscious response and these are termed primordial images or archetypes.[3] Art and poetry should on this theory always strive after impersonality.

But all art is also essentially personal, because all artistic activity springs from the artist's longing for self-expression. The perfect symbol is mathematical, because it is completely divested of individual associations. A symbol becomes poetical only in so far as it is coloured by personal feeling. If art is 'felt life', it is life which is felt primarily by the artist, and then only by readers or spectators. The personal touch is noticeable in all arts, in architecture and music as well as in painting and poetry, although it may be true that some arts are more personal than others. In poetry, the great romantics apart, Dante and Milton express emotions and experiences rooted in personal life. It is said that Shakespeare, the first among dramatic poets, is also the most impersonal of them all. He never unlocked his heart, except perhaps in the Sonnets; and there, too, if he really unlocked his heart, the less Shakespeare would he be. But Shakespeare's impersonality is sometimes over-emphasized. It is not

impossible to reconstruct some aspects of his personality from his poetry, though it may be true that he does not wear his heart on his sleeve. His view of womanhood, for example, is very different from Dante's, Milton's and Bernard Shaw's. Although every single statement in a Shakespeare play may have a meaning only in the dramatic setting, the aggregate of all that his characters say and do represents the total Shakespeare. 'The basis of great poetry,' say these critics, 'is originally and typically the recollection of personal experience.'

Poetry and the arts, therefore, are both personal and impersonal. This is best seen in the frequency and impossibility of literary translation. It is universally admitted that a work of genius, particularly in poetry, cannot be translated from one language into another, for a work of genius bears on it the stamp of the creator's personality. But equally is it true that such works are being daily translated and enjoyed, which shows that there is an impersonal, universal element in poetry and literature which does yield to translation. The problem for the poet or the critic is to find out where the personal touch ends and the impress of impersonality begins. Or in other words, what should be the proportion between personality and impersonality, if such proportion can be determined at all? Henry Newbolt says that 'if the poet dips his pen (as he must do) into his own peculiar ink-pot, he must take care that it does not come up clogged with the dust of trivial affairs, affairs of the mere ego, that transitory inhabitant of the world of prose and sentimen-

tality', but he points out, too, that the more ingenuously the poet concentrates himself upon his art, the more surely will all that he produces be dyed with the colour of his own vision.[4] The real problem is how to dye a product of art with the colour of personality and yet to reject the trivial affairs of the mere ego.

The same antinomy presents itself if the problem is examined from the point of view of psychical distance. Distance is obtained by separating the object from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs, but it does not mean that the relation between the object and the self is impersonal; on the contrary, art describes a personal relation, often highly coloured, but of a peculiar character. The problem is analogous to the one facing a patient consulting an oculist. With glasses in his eyes, he tries a book to see whether he can read it easily and comfortably. If he brings the book too near, he finds that everything is blurred; if he puts it too far off, everything is hazy. The proper adjustment is brought about by the oculist's skill. Bullough, the author of the phrase 'psychical distance', thinks that in poetic and artistic activity, the personal character of the relation (between the self and the object) has been, so to speak, filtered. It has been cleared of the practical, concrete nature of its appeal.[5]

III

Here aesthetics is confronted by another antinomy: Is art abstract or concrete? It is certainly concrete, because

the essence of concreteness is particularity. As pointed out before, according to the definition of the O.E.D. a quality is said to be concrete when it is found *concreted* or adherent to a substance, and hence, generally, it refers to a thing existing in a material, sensuous form. Art expresses individual emotions; every work of art has a particular distinctive form, sensuous and material. It is concrete, because it is individual and because it expresses itself through images. Arts differ from one another in many respects, but all the arts have this one point in common that they are individual and concrete; or looking at art from another point of view, we may say that an artist either expresses his own emotions or imitates nature, if, for the sake of argument, we assume that expression of emotions and imitation of nature may be viewed dichotomously, but in either case, he expresses something which is concrete and particular. He imposes on his emotions or on the object of his imitation forms which he alone can create. These forms have their individual characteristics, and these individual characteristics are qualities adherent, or concretely joined, to a work of art when viewed as a whole. Art is vital, and the most important feature of vitality is concreteness.

There are, however, certain other considerations which lead to the opposite conclusion, namely, that artistic activity is based on abstraction. First, if we believe that art is a theoretical activity, it must be abstracted from practical needs. It may create a world of its own, but that world consists of forms and not of living bodies;

the inhabitants of this world may be nurslings of immortality but they are not creatures of flesh and blood. It may be that the champions of abstract art — Cubists and Purists — carry this theory too far, but there is no doubt that art, even when it imitates life, is a system of abstractions, for it imitates the probable rather than the actual. Secondly, art proceeds through selection and rejects whatever is irrelevant to its purpose. In this way it gains in intensity what it loses in concreteness. This process of abstraction is best seen in Shakespearian drama, the most concrete of all art products, where the events of ten years are cramped within the compass of ten days or less, and we have to adopt a system of double-timing. Thirdly, art must be abstract, because it has to choose a medium which can give prominence to certain features but has to be blind to others. Here, too, intensity is achieved at the cost of concreteness. Music cannot see; architecture, sculpture, dancing and painting cannot hear, and not one of the arts can *touch* or *taste*. Poetry which can call up visions of a richer and more many-sided world than we find in other arts cannot give an impression of what is unrhythmical. When it hails beauty as truth, it seems to shut its eyes to truth that is not beauty.

IV

This discussion of the opposition between abstraction and concreteness in art leads to a consideration of yet

another problem: Is art intuitive and perceptual or intellectual and conceptual? If art is purposive, that is to say, if it is controlled by the purpose of the artist, whatever this purpose may be, then there must be a conceptual element in it. A whole is made up of parts, but we cannot intuit the whole without looking at the relationship between one part and another and between the parts and the whole which emerges out of them. Roger Fry defines art as consisting in vision and design. Even if vision is intuitive and individual, design is not. It may be said that every single work of art must have its own individual design, but an examination of the design invariably shows that it is connected with the artist's concept of Beauty and also his concepts of many other things. Reference has been made to the prevalence of general reflexions uttered by characters in a drama or a novel. Even if, for the sake of argument, it is assumed that these reflexions, such as the one on good name in man and woman in *Othello*, have only a contextual significance, the general design of a drama or a novel or even of a sighing lyric, cannot but be purposive and therefore intellectual.

In spite of all that has been said above, it cannot be denied that every work of art is essentially perceptual and intuitive. Our responses are immediate; we see that a painting is beautiful before we think that it is true to life or a distortion of reality. What intellectual content are we conscious of in a simple musical motive, in a decoration of a wall or in a delicate lyric? If we consider

a very complex work like El Greco's *Burial of Count Orgaz* or Shakespeare's *Hamlet* it is clear that these are not portraits of individual things but of the relations of individual things, although it must also be admitted that the final impression in El Greco's painting is of a scene and in Shakespeare's drama of a man.* What impresses us in a work of art is 'individual physiognomy', and individual physiognomy is intuitively known and not analysed by the intellect. Pater tries to get out of the difficulty of deciding between the contributions of intellect and intuition by positing the concept of the 'imaginative reason'. He believes that art is primarily concerned with form, and yet he notes, too, that artistic activity is accompanied by intellectual activity and that the function of the speculative intellect is to startle and rouse the human spirit to constant and eager observation. But can there be such a faculty as the 'imaginative reason', for is not reason by definition discursive rather than imaginative? If it is said that Pater only means that both the imagination and the reason enter into the creative process, then we are back to where we started from and have to decide how far art is intuitive and how far conceptual. And we have also to answer the further question whether art, if it appeals to reason in any form, can ever strive to be independent of the intelligence or to get rid of its responsibilities towards its subject.

*This does not take account of criticisms which do not find the significance of Shakespearian drama in portraiture of character.

Even if we agree that art is intuitive rather than intellectual, we are not out of the wood, for we are faced with the further riddle: In what way does the artistic intuition differ from the ordinary intuition or one artistic intuition from another? Is the difference one of intensity or of extensiveness? There were many plays of revenge in the age of Elizabeth as there were many portraits of the Madonna in Renaissance Europe. Are we to say that *Hamlet* is superior to *The Spanish Tragedy* because it gives an intenser picture of revenge, or are we to say that it contains a larger number of images or intuitions? The same question may be posed concerning the many portraits of the Virgin and her Son. The artistic imagination works through selection and condensation, and it may be said that it gives an intenser form of life than man lives ordinarily, and that, indeed, is one of the reasons why art has an entrancing effect upon us. On the other hand, if we once admit that art is intuition, we have to remember that every intuition is a self-contained and self-sufficient unit. So long as it is not fully elaborated, it lies in the region of formless sensation, but once it has got a local habitation and a name, it is complete and cannot be improved on. It that case, the difference between one intuition and another is only a difference in extensiveness, in the relative width of the field over which each operates, and all values in aesthetics would be quantitative rather than qualitative.

V

The controversy about the intuitive or intellectual character of art is mixed up with another controversy that deserves more than a passing notice. If art is intuitive, the artist only expresses his immediate apprehension, which is not interfered with by any other process. In other words, art is, on this view, spontaneous expression and the poet versifies only as the linnet sings. If the poet lives in a world which is created by himself and which is his own and no one else's, how do readers come to appreciate it? Is the reader an outsider who accidentally listens to what the poet is singing to himself or does he, too, with his likes and dislikes enter into the creative process? If the poet sings only to himself, why does he publish his poetry or set it down on paper? If he writes with a view to capturing the imagination of his readers, poetry is to be regarded not merely as an art of self-expression but also of communication, and who knows if the linnet sings to itself or to its mate? If this view is accepted, artistic activity is less spontaneous than at first it seems to be. In music the composer composes his notes by himself, but they are completed only when played by the performer. There is hardly any dramatist who does not write with a view to the stage he has at his command and the audience that will witness the performance of his plays, — in a word, with a view to communication rather than self-expression. But such a definition does injustice to the uniqueness of the artist's

vision, makes popularity (the greatest pleasure for the greatest number) the only criterion of aesthetic judgement and degrades the artist to the level of the ordinary conjurer and showman.

VI

It may be said that the above oppositions may be resolved if we look at art as a mere semblance. That was Plato's view, and this is one of the reasons why he wanted to banish poets from his Republic. The view that art has no connexion with life has been repeated after Plato even by men who have not Plato's antipathy to art. Schiller, a great poet and dramatist, defines art as *schein* or illusion. In our own times, Clive Bell, a celebrated art-critic, puts forward the same thesis when he asserts that art transforms us from the world of man's activity to a world of aesthetic exaltation, lifting us above the stream of life. Painting is 'virtual space', music 'virtual time'. To appreciate a work of art we need to bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions. To use art as a means to arousing emotions in life would, on this view, be like using a telescope for reading the daily news.[6] If literature has some commerce with real life, it is because literature, according to these critics, is never pure art. But even poetry seems to be no exception, because it is held that poetry strives after the condition of music in which the content is indistinguishable from form.

The above view of art is opposed by other critics who hold that art is intimately connected with the life men live on earth. Coleridge, it may be recalled, finds only a difference of degree and not of kind between the primary Imagination which is active in ordinary perception and the secondary Imagination of the poet. Shelley goes a step further and holds that 'a poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth'. According to him, 'poets are not only the authors of language and music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting; they are the institutors of laws, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true, that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is religion'. On this view not only was Lord Bacon a poet, but the poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.[7] Art is ideal, but possibly it gives, too, the most direct vision of life. Even Susanne Langer, who is an advocate of the doctrine of art as semblance, has to admit that in music, the most formal of all the arts, the tonal structures bear a close similarity to the forms of human feeling — 'forms of growth and attenuation, flowing and stowing, conflict and resolution, speed, arrest, terrific excitement, calm or subtle activation and dreamy lapses — not joy and sorrow perhaps, but the poignancy of either and both — the greatness and brevity and eternal passing of everything vitally felt.'[8]

The charge that art is a semblance has been answered in course of the discussion of Plato's aesthetics, and the suggestion has been made that far from being itself an

appearance, art is a direct vision of the Form of Truth or Beauty lying behind appearances. But it will be necessary to go deeper into the relation between art and life and also the allied problem of the connexion between content and form before we can solve the antinomies posed in the present chapter and get a clear idea of the workings of the artistic imagination.

CHAPTER X

Content and Form

I

THAT poetry and art should have a distinctive form is accepted by all critics, and the most popular definition of art is the one given by Clive Bell, that art is significant form. But there is difficulty as soon as we start defining 'form'. The word is commonly used to mean 'a set, customary or prescribed way of doing anything; a set method of procedure according to rule (e.g. at law); formal procedure' (O.E.D.). Thus understood, form is something general and customary without any individuality, and in this sense, what is merely formal is also lifeless. We would, with Tennyson, disapprove of keeping an ancient form through which the spirit breathes no more. In literary and other contexts, we use the word in this sense when we speak of tragedy, comedy, lyric, elegy, idyll etc., as so many 'forms' of literature and look to individual artists to breathe the spirit of life into them. It has already been pointed out that Croce calls them pseudo-aesthetic concepts incapable of precise definition, and lumping them with other pseudo-aesthetic concepts such as 'sublime' and 'noble', he says that the only way to define these terms would be to say that whatever is called comic or tragic by writers falls into the category of comedy or tragedy. What is important

for our purpose is that although these concepts may have a limited applicability to literary criticism, they are useless for a definition of literature. To say that *Hamlet* is a great tragedy does not mean much, for the play's belonging to the form of tragedy does not make it great; rather its greatness as a work of art makes it great also as a tragedy.

The first meaning the Oxford English Dictionary gives to 'form' is 'the visible aspect of a thing'. In this sense, 'form' is applicable to the visual arts alone, and perhaps it is in this sense that Clive Bell defines art as significant form. But such a meaning of the word has no point in non-visual arts like poetry and music. Form, as applied to the arts in general, means the way in which it presents itself to the creator as well as to the appreciative audience. But this, too, is an incomplete and partly inaccurate definition, and an enunciation of its limitations may lead to a correct appraisal of the true character of form. First of all, the above view makes form a matter of external presentation, but form in art is inherent in the product; a work of art is what it is by virtue of its form. A thing in the practical world, say the pen with which I am writing, has a form in which it presents itself to the beholder, but the form of such things has rarely any value for art. Then, again, although things in nature manifest themselves in mangificent form, we have yet to solve the basic problem how far, if at all, beauty in nature is analogous to beauty in art.

The most characteristic feature of form in art is that

behind the external — visible or aural — appearance, there is the inner constitutive principle which gives shape and colour and life. The form of a thing is made up of a proper arrangement of the parts; it is the form which makes a thing a unity or a whole. But, so far, form is only external shape which is found in inanimate objects, in living creatures and also in things made by men and animals. But true unity comes from an inner, vital principle which makes the parts co-operate with one another and merge themselves in the whole. Artistic form is different from natural form, because although natural objects have visual — or aural — beauty, we cannot capture the inner principle of life in them. Poets and artists can, and that is why for them there is very little difference between Nature and Art, and in their creative work they seem to themselves to be following a divine artist. Living creatures have both a body and a mind, but a comparison between life and art will only show the uniqueness of artistic form. In life the inner principle or the soul is distinct from the external shape; we cannot say that the peacock's mind is lofty and the monkey's ignoble. Socrates was ugly and villains have generally fascinating manners and appearance. But in the *Apollo Belvedere* or in *Il Gioconda*, it is the inner vital principle that limns the external features. Literature may at first sight seem to be different from the other arts, for here the characters move and talk and behave much as men do in real life. But here, too, there is the same basic difference. The actions and movements of characters

in dramas and novels are determined by an inner principle which is the source of aesthetic delight. This is the reason why poetry differs from life, why its heroines are beautiful and its language is lofty.

It is, indeed, true that art differs from life primarily by virtue of its form, and this has led some critics to think that art is form and nothing else. Clive Bell's definition of art as pure form has already been mentioned. Roger Fry describes in detail how art must be different from life and is to be judged by formal qualities alone.[1] As it is not possible for any one to look at every aspect of a thing, our visions in practical life are limited to the utilitarian side of form, to those features which are necessary for us in our day-to-day activity. In real life we are not interested in form *per se*. Here if we see a wild bull, our first instinct is to fly away; we can have thus only a vague idea of its form and even this vague idea can in no way be connected with aesthetic enjoyment. But if we see the same wild bull in a cinema, we shall have no such impulse; we shall see it clearly, and enjoy its beauty of form.*

The artist's vision is as abstract as the practical man's, for he dissociates himself from all aspects of a thing which are not formal, that is to say, from all practical, metaphysical or scientific aspects. He looks upon an object as it is, without any relation to other things. This concentration makes him blind to many characteristics but also reveals to him nuances which for other men are

* There is a striking similarity between Roger Fry's views and those of the Indian philosopher Abhinavagupta (*vide* Chapter VIII).

irrelevant. 'Art,' says Roger Fry, 'demands the most complete detachment from any of the meanings and implications of appearances.'[2] If, for example, we look at a Sung bowl, we apprehend gradually its outside contour, the perfect sequence of the lines and the subtle modifications of a certain type of curve; we feel the relation of the concave curves of the inside to the outside contour and realize, too, that the precise thickness of the walls is consistent with the particular kind of matter of which it is made. Such apprehension is unconditioned by notions of space and time or by moral, economic and scientific theories. That is why the artist, though of all men the most consistently observant of objects, is so one-sided in his vision that he is not swayed even by considerations of beauty and ugliness. If objects are looked at from the purely formal point of view, the difference we make in real life between beauty and ugliness disappears in art and a slum becomes as much a subject for aesthetic contemplation as St. Paul's.

The aesthetic apprehension described above is an apprehension of form which is most easily discernible in works of art that have neither verisimilitude nor any meaning expressible in words, — in Byzantine decoration, in architecture, in landscape-painting, most of all, in music. Clive Bell would exclude literature from the category of art on the ground that as it has a content of ideas, its significance can never be purely formal.[3] The nature of the non-literary arts will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. It may be pointed out here

that worshippers of pure form need not — and most of them do not — leave out poetry in a definition of art, because poetry, too, is supposed to be pure expression. If there are ideas in poetry, these, it may be argued, are immaterial to its artistic significance. Poetry, according to Aristotle, owes its origin to the instinct for 'imitation' and the instinct for harmony and rhythm. Rhythm and harmony are formal qualities which depend on the relations of parts of a work to one another and of the parts to the whole, and imitation may be imitation of the formal distinctiveness of things. In its purely formal aspects poetry is allied to music, and if Aristotle looks upon Plot as the most important element in a tragedy, it is because Plot, which develops gradually from the beginning to the middle and from the middle to the end, best exhibits the formal qualities of rhythm and harmony.[4]

II

It is now necessary to examine the nature of the sensibility which produces 'significant form' and to see if the significance of a work of art can be purely formal. Clive Bell calls the creative state of the soul an emotion and holds out a warning against mixing it 'with facts and ideas'.[5] But Roger Fry's view is that it is something more than mere emotion, that the sensually logical conformities in a work of art are the outcome of a feeling of purpose — of what, for want of a better name, he

calls an idea, and the Sung bowl referred to above is for him the expression of an idea in the artist's mind. The use of the word 'idea' shows that in Roger Fry's opinion the formative imagination is not merely an emotional but also an intellectual faculty.[6] As artistic activity finds logical conformities in what is sensuous, as it arranges parts to form a whole in accordance with the artist's purpose, and interests itself in 'relations' of things, it cannot be as purely intuitive as some critics suppose it to be.

The 'idea' which determines the form of a work does not move in the air; it is even less autonomous than it seems to be at first sight. It is controlled by the artist's purpose, by what he wants to express. The true content of a work of art consists of the artist's feelings and ideas, his emotional and intellectual reactions to life, and these regulate the activities of the formative imagination which breathes life into them. We may start with an example taken from ordinary affairs un-illuminated by any artistic purpose. Suppose a man has to arrange sixty-four objects in a suitable form. He may arrange them in single file or in any one of the following ways: 32x2, 16x4, 8x8, or 4x4x4. Which particular order will be most appropriate on a particular occasion will depend on many considerations—the shape of the things, the size of the field, for example — but a primary factor will be the purpose for which the things are being arranged. Since the very early days of Greek philosophy, there has been an attempt to find a purely geometrical

formula for the attainment of beauty in art, and it is claimed that the Golden Section, which means cutting a straight line into two parts in such a manner that the rectangle contained by the whole and one of the segments is equal to the square of the other segment, gives us the perfect harmony which art aims at. The pyramids have been explained by it, and it is used in securing the right proportions in all beautiful things, — in designing doors and windows and even in fixing the length and breadth of the pages of a book. In spite of the almost mystical adoration accorded to the Golden Section, its universality has been called in question by some critics, for it has been shown that there are works of art which have secured proportion and harmony, even though they have departed from it. A more important consideration is that the many works of art which obey this law vary widely in their appeal, and the significance of the pyramids and Gothic cathedrals will depend as much on the ideas they express as on the manipulation of the Golden Section, for it is these ideas which have largely determined the way in which this geometrical law has been used in particular works of art.[7] Advocates of formalist theories think that '*form is first*, and then representational function accrues to it. Gradually the decorative forms are modified more and more to picture all sorts of objects — leaves, vines, the intriguing shapes of marine life, flights of birds, animals, people, things. But the basic motifs remain: rings become eyes without undergoing any transformation, triangles become beards and spirals curls,

ears, branches, breaking waves.'[8] The question about the relative priority of form and content is as old and as insoluble as the question whether the hen came first or the egg. But even if for the sake of argument we admit that form is chronologically primary, it does not mean that it dominates content only because content comes later. Rather it may be said that the domination is mutual, that as the spiral began to represent a wave, or better still, an idea in the artist's mind, its character as a spiral was modified and its value as a work of art came to be judged by other standards than by mere geometrical laws of form.

How form is directed by the content which it endows with life may best be seen if we compare works of art by different artists on a common theme. Doll Tearsheet is a woman of ill fame, and so are the poor girl lamented by Hood in *The Bridge of Sighs* and Kitty Warren in Bernard Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession*. It may at first be thought that there is the same content in all these works, but they are dissimilar because the formative imaginations of the three writers are different. This would be a superficial view, because the content of art does not lie in the mere theme but consists rather of the artist's feelings, thoughts and ideas. The Doll Tearsheet scenes in 2 *Henry IV* are sheer horseplay, Hood's poem is a lyric poignantly expressing the poet's sympathy for a fallen woman, and Shaw's drama is a serious comedy. The forms of the three works are different, because prostitution for the creator of Falstaff is gross sensuality

whereas Hood looks upon it as an act of sin for which the punishment meted out by society is greater than the offence, and for Shaw it is an economic phenomenon which has to be approached seriously but not sentimentally. The forms of these works are strikingly dissimilar because the attitudes of the three writers are different, but what is worth emphasizing is that the formal beauties of these works cannot be appreciated or judged without reference to their intellectual-emotional contents.

How the intellectual content exercises a regulating influence on the form will also be clear if we consider works by different artists on a theme they have all found ready to their hand. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides worked on ancient Greek legends and took few liberties so far as the mere theme of the stories was concerned. All of them wrote tragedies, and yet each Athenian drama has its own distinctive stamp, the *Electra* of Sophocles being very different from Euripides's play on the same theme. A superficial view of the plays would lead one to think that the content or subject-matter is the same and the difference or distinctiveness is due to the dominating influence of form, which varies from dramatist to dramatist or from play to play. But a close analysis of any two dramas on analogous themes will show that the characters, incidents and even language differ because the dramatists have different attitudes to life. The Don Juan story is as much an objective theme for modern artists as the Greek legends were for Athenian dramatists. But the artists — Molière, Mozart, and Byron — have each

looked at it from a peculiar point of view and these peculiarities are reflected in formal composition. Indeed, the artists discover their ideas in well-known stories in the same manner in which Michelangelo is said to have discovered his statues in unhewn marble. Or we may put it in another way and say that the traditional theme which the artist works on has stimulated his imagination, but it is not the content of his work, as some people think. The artist finds his idea embodied in the story which thus becomes a part of the form of his work, and he interprets — that is to say, re-creates — the theme in his own fashion. Does the theme suggest the idea or does the idea take the artist to the theme? This, again, is a question as insoluble as the one about the priority of the first egg or the first hen. There is no doubt that the artist would not be an artist if he had no imagination, but the imagination has to work on the content of ideas, which, being fused into it, must exercise a directing influence on form. 'Making imaginary people talk in an imaginary situation' — that, Shaw suggests, is the essence of dramatic genius. But what would the imaginary people be like, what would they talk about and what would be the situations appropriate to them? The answers to these questions would certainly depend on the ideas that the dramatist wants to express. Bernard Shaw's startlingly new thesis that Don Juan is not the hunter but the quarry controls his portraiture of men and women and directs his genius for inventing situations, and it is Shaw's philosophy which is partly responsible for the wrigglings

and sophistries and the interminably long speeches against which the Devil in *Man and Superman* complains.

III

Art is built on the artist's experiences, the emotions or ideas to which his shaping imagination gives a living form. The experiences and emotions and ideas, it cannot too often be repeated, are the content of a work of art and the emergent shape is the form. The two together make a work of art what it is. Form and content are found fused together in every successful specimen of art and any attempt to exalt form over content — as Pater and Croce have done — is bound to give a misleading impression of artistic activity. Although form and content are found incorporated into each other, the question has been pertinently raised whether they are detachable and capable of being considered separately. Bernard Shaw, who says that new ideas make their technique as water makes its channel, thinks nevertheless that they can be viewed and judged in isolation, and that is why he holds that it is the philosophy that changes, not the craft of the artist, that nobody can improve on Shakespeare's command of language or Michelangelo's mastery of graphic line although their ideas have now been outmoded.[9] On the other hand, the majority of critics hold that form and content are indissoluble, that the elements of which they are composed are a unity rather than an aggregate. A.C. Bradley, who may be cited as a distinguished representative

of this school, although, unfortunately, he regards characters and images as belonging to content rather than to form, says: '.....it is a unity in which you can no more separate a substance and a form than you can separate living blood and the life in the blood. This unity has, if you like, various "aspects" or "sides", but they are not factors or parts; if you try to examine one, you find it is also the other. Call them substance or form if you please, but these are not the reciprocally exclusive substance and form to which the two contentions *must* refer. They do not "agree", for they are not apart; they are one thing from different points of view, and in that sense identical. And this identity of content and form, you will say, is no accident; it is of the essence of poetry in so far as it is poetry, and of all art in so far as it is art.'[10]

The correct way would be to look upon the fusion of these elements neither as a unity in the sense in which Bradley understands it nor as an aggregate, but as a synthesis in which the parts are not lost in the whole. Borrowing an analogy from Indian aesthetics, we may say that the *rasa* of a work of art is like the taste of a drink in which various ingredients have been mixed. The ordinary man drinks it as an undivided whole, but the connoisseur not merely relishes the total mixture but appreciates also the value of the various ingredients and how they are mixed together. As already pointed out, there is an interval between the primary meaning of words and their suggested, evoked meaning in which

lies the soul of poetry; the interval is so short as almost to be imperceptible, but there is no reason why the poet or the critic should be unaware of it. Analogies are always imperfect, but they are often suggestive. Content and form are sometimes said to be as indissoluble as the body and the mind. Although the mind resides in the body and the death of the body also means the death of the mind, we still make valid distinctions between bodily ailment and mental worry, physical strength and mental ability. Similarly, although form and content constitute an indissoluble unity, it is possible and useful to estimate their contributions separately and also their reactions on each other.

It may be said that if the regulating, directing influence of content is once conceded, it would mean the end of freedom for the formative imagination and art would only be a handmaiden to philosophy or propaganda. There is, however, no ground for such a view, for the artistic imagination has its own laws of unity, harmony and vitality, and although it is tied to a content, it also transforms the latter, which has no value in art independent of such transformation. Indeed, there are occasions when the formative imagination not merely gives to the content the colour and warmth of life, but also new substance. Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, as is well known, started as a satire on sentimental romance, but through Parson Adams, it is itself steeped in sentiment. Don Quixote and Pickwick arouse comic feeling in their early adventures but gradually they evoke sympathy and

respect. Once the characters in a novel or a drama begin to live in their own way, their authors are partly relegated to the role of spectators. Art is born of the logic of content and the magic of form. Even when the imagination has transformed the artist's original impulse or purpose and has revealed truths and ideas of which the artist might not have been conscious in the beginning, the work of art is not without its content of ideas; in art the content is not what the artist has deliberately proposed but what the form reveals. This is the reason why the artist is not often his best critic or interpreter.

Although the formative imagination works in a magical way and poets and artists often feel that they are guided by a daemon, it does not wholly baffle analysis. The first characteristic of form is adequacy; the form must be able fully to depict the ideological content. Shakespearian drama lacks the simplicity or neatness of Athenian drama — which, again, has not the largeness or complexity to be found in Shakespeare's works. The aesthetic appeal of Greek and Shakespearian dramas depends largely on the way in which the different structural forms have succeeded in representing divergent attitudes to life. We know that there are artists who seem to have striking ideas but their expression is blurred and vague, because their formative imagination has failed to keep pace with their philosophy. On the other hand, there are artists like Swinburne whose technical equipment is remarkable but whose vision of life is neither subtle nor profound.[11] The concept of adequacy, however, is partly misleading,

because the content of a work of art is, as has just been pointed out, nothing more or less than what the form endows with life. So if an artistic effort has failed, it is not because the form is inadequate or the content is poor, but because the creative imagination which effects a synthesis between the two is weak.

From the purely structural point of view, the principal characteristic of form is unity in variety, that quality which finds order in a chaos of details and reduces 'succession to an instant'. Man's deepest instinct is for harmony, and that is why both his intellect and his imagination want to organize his thoughts, feelings, and experiences into an ordered whole. But the unity in human activity is the unity of an idea and not merely of form. It is impossible to think of a more appropriate example of unity in variety than the rainbow where seven different colours constitute a beautiful whole, but the rainbow is not a work of art, because it has no ideological content. As Coleridge points out, 'images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion;.....or lastly, when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit,

Which shoots its being through earth, sea, and air.'[11]

This brings us to the most important characteristic of aesthetic form. It must have a life of its own even when it expresses immobility and rigidity, or a feeling of deadness. The 'predominant passion' to which Coleridge refers belongs to the content of art, but that magical faculty by means of which the predominant passion is projected or expressed is the power that gives form. This adds

> The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream.

What relation art bears to personal or social life will be discussed in the following chapter. It will suffice here to say that art creates a new world which is convincing by reason of its mere appearance; what the imagination seizes as Beauty it also beholds as Truth, because all that is living must also be true. The difference between science or philosophy and art is that although philosophy and science can give unity and cohesion, they cannot produce the impression of vitality. Art takes the help of discursive reason but it does not prove; it only reveals. Artistic creation is not a method but an event, and we have only to view it to be assured of its truth and vitality. This is the gift of form, and since without this faculty which we call the formative imagination no man can be an artist, we may concede — but in this sense alone — that form is prior to content. It is possible that Bernard Shaw's view of prostitution (*Mrs Warren's Profession*) or his opinion about the soldier's instinctive cowardice

(*Arms and the Man*) is based on statistical evidence, but it is the creative form and not the evidence that makes the dramas living. It may be noted in passing that the vitality of art may be the vitality of a character or even of an idea which has been intuitively apprehended. Confining ourselves to the two examples given above, we find that it is primarily the character of Bluntschli that gives life to *Arms and the Man* whereas in *Mrs Warren's Profession* it is not any character but an idea that first becomes vivid and vital and it is this idea that communicates the spark of life to the characters and the story.

IV

A word should now be said about the value of such formal categories as 'tragedy', 'comedy', 'lyric', 'epic', 'elegy' etc., which Croce designates as pseudo-aesthetic concepts. These are only partly formal, because they are to some extent determined by the content; an elegy, for example, must have as its subject-matter the death of some one whom the poet loved and admired. These categories help the understanding (and possibly also the creation) of art, because they enable us to compare a particular work of art with works having some similarity with it, and because through them we can know what we may normally expect from a particular work of art. But there are limits within which alone a recognition of these categories which are essentially empirical, can be useful. First, as Croce points out, it is not possible to

give any precise definition of any of these 'types' or 'forms', because they insensibly pass into one another, and are, therefore, incapable of scientific analysis. Secondly, it must be remembered that every individual work of art creates its own individual form, and the really important question is not whether it obeys the prescribed rules of any category but whether the form is adequate and vital. Yet a reference to known categories, pseudo-aesthetic though they may be, will help us to realize the peculiarities of an individual work of art. Take *Troilus and Cressida* for example. The Quarto called it a history, but the writer of the Epistle appended to the Second 'issue' obviously looked upon it as a comedy, and in the Folio it is printed as a tragedy. It is not an historical play, because it is based on legend and not on history, and cannot, therefore, be classed either with the English historical dramas or with the Roman plays.[12] Neither can we call it a tragedy, because Hector, whose death is represented in the last act, is not the protagonist of the play, and Hector's death in *Troilus and Cressida* cannot arouse the emotion that is occasioned by the death of Hamlet or Othello. Should we then call it a comedy? But here, too, there is a difficulty, for it is too sombre and bitter to be called a pure comedy. It will thus be seen that by trying to fit this play into the recognized categories, we advance towards a realization of its individual form.

Writing about the two books of Goethe's *Faust*, A.C. Bradley says that the widely divergent impressions

produced by them is due to the conscious reflexion which played a determining role in the Second Part but was more or less absent in the First. 'Goethe himself,' Bradley says, 'could never have told the world what he was going to express in the First Part of *Faust*: the poem told *him*, and it is one of the world's greatest. He knew too well what he was going to express in the Second Part and with all its wisdom and beauty it is scarcely a great poem.'[13] It is always risky to speculate how far an artist consciously reflected on his work, and how far he might be regarded as an unreflecting agent, but so far as Goethe's *Faust* is concerned, we can understand the difference between the two parts better if we confine our attention to the relationship between the content and the form. In the First Part, the form, including the characters and the images and also the way in which the story is manipulated, is adequate and living and the different scenes are harmoniously related to the work as a whole. In the Second Part, the conception may be vast, but the form is hardly adequate and even the content is only dimly revealed in the imperfectly-drawn characters and the chaotic succession of scenes. It is an inferior work of art, because Goethe's formative imagination failed to rise to the demands made on it. In a successful work of art, form and content are locked in a fast embrace, and if the ideas are large, the form — characters, plots, and images — must be large, too, but that aspect of the content alone should be considered which has been revealed in the form. Form exists only to launch the content of

ideas into life, and art may safely ignore ideas that have not the vital spark. What matters in art is the total impression in which form and content, fused into a unity, are equally important. If we think that the content of ideas is detachable from form, we shall, in the manner of Bernard Shaw and the Marxists, confuse propaganda with art. Or if with Croce we hold that art is expression and that it has no ideological content, criticism will resolve itself into a compilation of catalogues or into a collection of descriptive, question-begging epithets. Great art is great not only in its ideas but also in its form.

CHAPTER XI

Art and Life

I

EVEN a superficial view of art and literature shows how widely they differ from nature and life. A painting never copies life as a photograph does, and poetry and literature portray strange characters and describe strange incidents. What happen in life and nature are facts; what the arts create are fictions. Shelley's oft-quoted lines may be quoted again:

> Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
> But feeds on the aerial kisses
> Of shapes that haunt Thought's wildernesses.
> He will watch from dawn to gloom
> The lake-reflected sun illume
> The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
> Nor heed nor see what things they be;
> But from these create he can
> Forms more real than living man,
> Nurslings of immortality!

In real life ghosts and witches never come to meet us, we do not choose our husbands by lottery, and a usurer who demands a pound of flesh in lieu of interest would be sent to a lunatic asylum. Aristotle says that history deals with the actual and poetry with the probable, with

what may happen or ought to happen and that a probable impossibility is to be preferred to a thing improbable and yet possible. The happenings in poetry should, according to him, be guided by the laws of probability and necessity. If a dramatist solves a problem in a drama by imagining a sudden earthquake, which is possible but not very probable, he will, on this view, be working against the laws of his craft, but in the last scene of *The Mill on the Floss* George Eliot imagines a sudden flood which looks probable, because the consequences are in accord with what has gone before. The deaths of Tom and Maggie are an unforeseen accident, but the end is in keeping with the beginning. The flood reveals something, which, though startlingly new, seems only to give completeness to the significance of the events in the novel.

It is necessary at this stage to delve deeper into the concepts of 'probability' and 'necessity'. Probability ordinarily means that which, on a study of statistical averages, is likely to happen; thus it is on such a basis that we may say that it is probable that there will be so many inches of rain in July in Calcutta. Events in poetry and art cannot be probable from such a point of view; we cannot say that we may probably meet a witch or a ghost or that the inside and outside of a house can both be equally visible at once as they are in Giotto's *The Vision of St Anne*. The concept of necessity also has to be understood in a special sense. Necessity ordinarily means the compulsion prevailing through the material

universe and governing all happenings in the phenomenal as well as in the human world. But if the world itself is fictitious, the concept of necessity, as we understand it in practical life, becomes obviously irrelevant. It seems, too, that the probable and the necessary are not always causally connected. What may happen is not always what ought to happen, and what may probably happen may not happen in fact. But what is necessary is bound to happen, and the question of its being merely probable does not arise at all; certainty includes mere probability. When Aristotle spoke of necessity, he did not make any distinction between physical and moral necessity. But such a distinction does exist. A ball shot into the air is bound to fall into the ground. But a bad man is not necessarily punished, and we know too little of human psychology to be able to say with any conviction whether his badness has any necessary consequences in his inner life.

In aesthetics, these difficulties will vanish if we remember the ideal character of art. Art is the expression of the artist's idea, and necessity in art is primarily the inevitability with which one part of a work must follow from what has gone before or lead to what will come after. It is the necessity of form, of 'vital' expression. Although art is fictitious and not amenable to scientific laws, yet it must produce an impression of vital flow. Art need not be life-like, but it must be like life. Art has an ideological content, but that content may also be argued scientifically or philosophically through a long

train of reasoning. What art achieves is immediate conviction, because we feel that in the world created by it things must happen as they are shown as happening. Such conviction — we can call it 'necessity' — we can never have in real life, except possibly in mathematical sciences* which, however, being abstract, are devoid of vitality.

It is pertinent to ask here: What is the relation of art and poetry to life and nature? If art is, indeed, a fiction, a deviation from real life, why should we not make the deviation complete and create art which is cut off from life? Why do we call art vital and even judge it by the concepts of unity and harmony which are derived from life? Why should Picasso give his cubes and cones such titles as *Woman Resting*, *Seated Woman* or *Standing Woman*? If, as Clive Bell and others think, the beauty of a work of art does not move us in the same way as the beauty of a flower or a butterfly, why should we paint such objects as flowers and butterflies at all? If art is only significant form, why do these critics go further and say that it gives us a sense of ultimate reality? Whatever 'ultimate' may mean, this concession shows that art deviates from life only to return to it.

II

The relation between art and life should, therefore, be examined in greater detail. There are, indeed, many

* Or in physical sciences in so far as they are governed by mathematical laws.

reasons for which it is not possible for art to hold the mirror up to nature. The artist's work is purposive; he wants to express an idea, and whatever the theme of it may be, this idea dominates his feeling, thought, and expression. He concentrates on certain aspects of his experiences and is blind to others. This concentration not only gives clarity to his vision but also makes the world of art intenser than the world in which he lives and from which he derives the raw materials for his work. This is the reason why the secondary imagination of the poet is basically different from the primary imagination that is employed in ordinary perception. It is true that in ordinary perception, too, we reject aspects of things that are irrelevant to our practical needs, that a photograph reveals facets of things of which we are ordinarily unaware, and that men in daily life are often swayed by intense, violent passions. But when the artist's frenzy seizes hold of him, we have intensity of a different kind. The frenzy expresses itself in shapes created by the formative imagination which holds, as it were, a bull's-eye lantern to the great crises and catastrophes of life. The intensity of art is illuminated by the artist's vision of the deeper mysteries of life.

It may be said that there is the same purposiveness in life, too: that the seedling grows into the mighty tree and that St Helena is implicit in Austerlitz. But the creative purpose, even if there is one in the phenomenal world, is not immediately apprehensible and that is why nature or life is not art. It is true that the botanist tracing

the growth of a seedling discovers a principle of unity in its development and the historian may show that Austerlitz led by gradual stages to St Helena. But these conclusions will be proved by reference to evidence; the imagination will not grasp them as single wholes. If a philosopher can, like Bergson, visualize evolution as a whole and give his conclusions the vividness and vitality which is within the reach of the formative imagination, he will be not merely a philosopher but also an artist. And that is why we think that imaginative historians who portray the march of events in history as a procession of living men and weld scattered incidents into a unified whole are less historians than poets writing in prose. The artistic vision is complex, it takes note of sequences, but it has a peculiar intensity, because, in the words of G. Wilson Knight, we are prepared to see it laid out, so to speak, as an area, being simultaneously aware of thickly scattered correspondences in a single view of the whole.[1]

Roger Fry, Clive Bell, and Herbert Read think that the artist has to distort reality out of regard for formal considerations which are the only considerations that should sway him. On this view, there is distortion even in Greek sculpture, in the straight line of the nose and the forehead or in the exaggerated length of the legs, and this distortion is dictated by the artist's passion for ideal forms. But distortion is much more marked in modern art in which natural forms are recreated in terms of rhythm and colour; even when art is arhythmical,

distortion only shows how art dispenses with the ordinary rhythms of life in order to create its own higher rhythms. An artist, according to Roger Fry, lives two lives — the imaginative and the actual, and 'between these two lives there is this great distinction, that in actual life the processes of natural selection have brought it about that the instinctive reaction, such, for instance, as flight from danger, shall be the important part of the whole process ..... But in the imaginative life no such action is necessary, and, therefore, the whole consciousness may be focussed upon the perceptive and emotional aspects of the experience.'[2] 'Imagine,' says Clive Bell, 'a boat in complete isolation, detach it from man and his urgent activities and fabulous history, what is it that remains, what is it to which we still react emotionally? What but pure form, and that which, lying behind pure form, gives it its significance?'[3] No wonder that art constantly employs forms which are so much distorted as to disconcert and baffle human interest. This distortion of reality is not confined to visual arts like painting and sculpture. Musical tones are the result of the distortion of normal human speech, and poetry, which uses rhymes and metres, is a heightened, abnormal form of speech. Pottery and architecture do not produce an impression of distortion, but of all the arts, these are the most utilitarian and the most unrepresentational.

It is held that distortions or departures from exact imitation are dictated not merely by the artist's will to impose form, his passion for a balanced or unified pattern

or mass but also by his desire to make a symbol for something super-real, something spiritual. 'I think,' says Herbert Read, 'it might be held that the second aim, the desire to make art symbolical, is not strictly aesthetic. Few works of art are so impressive as the Byzantine churches at Ravenna; but the art is partly the work of time. The impression, that is to say, is not purely artistic, but partly historical, partly religious, partly atmospheric. and to that extent must not be credited to the power of the artist. Isolate the art and you are reduced to the elements of form and colour.'[4] What is worth noting is that although Herbert Read and others lay emphasis on the formal qualities of art, they cannot rid themselves of vitalistic bias. Speaking of pottery, one of the most abstract of arts, Read says that the Chinese vase expresses 'dynamic harmony; it is not only a relation of numbers, but also a living movement'.[5] It is difficult to understand what he means by 'a living movement' except that it suggests, by means of its technical devices, the movement one finds in life. Clive Bell often refers to 'vital' art, and speaking of the Cézannesque boat in the passage already quoted, he says that it expresses not merely pure form but that which lying behind pure form, gives it its significance. And what can this 'something' be except the idea the artist wants to express?

III

It is not denied that art has qualities that are purely formal, and that such qualities are more in evidence in

pottery, architecture, and music than in painting and sculpture, or more than in poetry in which the meaning is as important as the form. But all art tries to express ideas and not only are ideas rooted in life, but it is with reference to life that they are ultimately to be judged. Apart from the impact of ideas, art resembles life, which it does not copy, in two important aspects. First, art like life is an organic growth; life in art is more concentrated and intense than in nature, and it is imaginary rather than actual existence. But there is the same impulse of growth, the same irrepressible urge for expression as well as the same sense of unity in diversity. The most prominent characteristic of the living world — and partly also of the non-living world—is that the germ passes through an ever-expanding process of self-expression. It is very difficult to say if there is anything in common between the stripling of eight and the old man of eighty; their photographs would reveal amazing discrepancies. But one thing is certain, that physically they are the same unit, that the boy has developed in a more and more intricate manner, as the years have passed, and become the man of eighty. In life the lines of this development are faint and even partly hypothetical. It is the peculiarity of art that here nothing is hypothetical and everything is vivid. Art takes a segment of life and seizes the principle of flux in what seems to be sluggish or immobile. We need not bother about such irrelevant details as the number of children Lady Macbeth had, but we are both amazed and amused to find that although she is eager to

crush her maternal instincts in the interests of ambition, she is held back by the fancied resemblance of the intended victim to her father.

Another characteristic which art shares with life is unpredictability. All art is controlled by the artist's idea and the necessities of form, and to that extent all art is artificial. But within this limitation, art creates an impression of complete freedom. Everything that happens in a drama or a novel is a revelation, and yet everything is characteristic. That is what we expect in life, too. I know that my best friend will have something new to say on every occasion, and that is why I find him interesting, but although life is a flux and no man is the same at any two moments, I have this confidence, too, that whatever he says and does, will be true to his personality; else he would be an enigma in whom I could not take sustained interest. If movements in art had not this element of unpredictability — and here poetry takes precedence of the other arts — art would be mechanical and unrevealing, but if these movements were not controlled by the artist's ideas and his sense of form, they would be chaotic. Art, like life, resembles 'the multifoliate rose' which opens its petals in different directions but never loses its identity or structural unity. Form has a double function; it gives vitality which means inscrutability and freedom. But fused with the content, it also controls exuberance and disorder.

It is from this point of view that we should interpret probability and necessity. The necessity of art is imposed

partly by the artist's ruling idea and partly by the demands of form. What ought to be does not mean what is normally probable or what is desirable according to ethical codes prevalent in society. It is what the ruling idea prescribes and what the laws of vitality, unity and harmony determine. The artist's imagination gives to moral necessity the inevitability that in actual life we attribute to mathematical and physical laws. The poet creates a new world which has two basic characteristics; it expresses emotions and ideas and it is living. It gives more importance to emotions than to reasoning, because it believes that emotions are more expressive than intellectual convictions, and its probability is achieved by the formative imagination which creates living forms even when it sets out only to express ideas. The questions that we should ask of a work of art are: Does it give adequate—that is to say—living expression to the artist's ideas? And, then, is the ideological content rich and large?* It is the magic of form—and here art is superior to Nature—that it produces an impression of the intricacy and richness of life without life's triviality, aimlessness and anarchy.

IV

While exploring the relation between art and life or nature, we would do well to consider minutely Aristotle's

* As pointed out in the preceding chapter, form and content are interdependent; the content is what the form expresses and can have no largeness or richness of its own, and one of the principal qualities of form is its suitability for the content.

views on the subject. Aristotle, who regards poetry and the arts as modes of 'imitation', seems to use the term in two senses — idealized representation and also photographic reproduction. When he says that poetry is an imitation of the universal, the probable, and the necessary, he means creation rather than copying. But imitation, according to him, may mean also faithful, un-idealized copying. As he looks upon poetry as a means of knowledge, he holds that objects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals, and dead bodies.[6]

There are two problems raised here: (*i*) whether ugly, painful, and horrible subjects may be made aesthetically pleasant, and (*ii*) whether minute fidelity of representation has any artistic value. It has already been pointed out in the chapter on Indian aesthetics that the horrible and the painful of real life cannot produce horror and pain in art, because emotions in art are *alaukika* or unearthly. But how are they made positively delightful? Keats says that we read with pleasure of the ravages of a beast of prey, 'and we do so...from the sense of power abstracted from the sense of good. . . . Though a quarrel in the Streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine. . . . This is the very thing in which consists poetry; and if so it is not so fine a thing as philosophy—For the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth.'[7] If we combine the Indian view with Keats's, we can realize why the poetry of the ugly is

beautiful or a picture of the horrible is entrancing. It is not the faithfulness of copying, but the power of abstraction and transformation, and the portrayal of vital energy which make the painful aesthetically pleasant. But it will be wrong to say that this abstraction means isolation from the true and the good or that poetry on this ground is not so fine a thing as philosophy. The horrible and the ugly do not lose their horribleness and ugliness in art; only these aspects are denuded of their repulsiveness. They become easier to contemplate and can, therefore, act as guides to the exploration of truth. Iago is beautiful as a portrait of 'energy' or 'power', but the idealized motive-hunting of motivelesss malignity also enables us the more effectively to gauge the depths of evil, and in this way poetry is firmly knit to life.

Coming now to the second point, viz., whether minute fidelity of reproduction has any artistic merit, we may say that although mere copying is without any creative purpose and cannot attain to a high degree of excellence, faithfulness of reproduction may enrich our aesthetic sense by strengthening the assurance of truth. That is the value of science when scientific truths are rendered into poetry. As illustration, we may consider the following lines from Shelley:

> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
> Until Death tramples it to fragments.

Or

> Thou
> For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
> Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
> The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
> The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
> Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
> And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear.

It will be absurd to deny that our knowledge of the diffraction of light by a prism makes our understanding of the first passage firmer and that we appreciate the second better when we realize that plants under water react to seasonal changes on land. But the converse will not hold good, for the truth of art is not primarily the truth of fact but the truth of emotions and ideas. So it will not matter much if the artist gives a wrong view of scientific phenomena, provided he can make us feel that he has grasped the truth of emotion and character. And accurate scientific statements or perfect imitations or reproductions of nature, too, will not be artistic unless the artist's vision of life is true. The ontological content of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* has been outmoded and the Ptolemaic system of astronomy which has been woven into the structure of the *Divina Commedia* has been proved to be wrong. But the emotions of Lucretius and Dante and their outlook on life are only remotely dependent on the philosophical or scientific background; their spiritual insight is true even though the atomic theory or the Ptolemaic hypothesis is wrong. These, however,

are not without their significance in *De Rerum Natura* or the *Divina Commedia*, because they help to give largeness and sweep to personal emotions and supply the poetic imagination with appropriate forms. Possibly the poems would have had a richer appeal if we could have accepted the outmoded systems of thought, but the acceptance of any such system would not by itself make for poetic beauty. The scientific truths of Darwinism which Tennyson embodied in his poetry have not lost their force yet, but there has been a reaction against Tennyson because even the reader who holds Darwin's theories feels that Tennyson has not gone deep into the moral and religious problems raised by them. On the other hand, we can readily enter into Wordsworth's nostalgia for Paganism because although we do not believe in the Homeric gods, they help to bring out Wordsworth's love for Nature and hatred of modern civilization, and these sentiments which we can share with the poet are made vivid by references to ancient myths which leap into life and endow the poet's emotions and ideas with timeless appeal.

The relation between life and art may be further clarified if we investigate our reactions to ghost-stories. Children are absorbed by such stories because the ghosts are real folk to them, but adults are less interested because they are more sceptical, and will feel a lively curiosity only if the story-teller can bring about a temporary suspension of their disbelief. An inquiry into the introduction of the supernatural in Shakespeare's dramas will

throw an interesting light on the problem under discussion. In real life Macbeth would have silently nursed his criminal intention and his very interesting history would never have been revealed. In real life Hamlet would take a long time to have his suspicions confirmed, and possibly this confirmation, if it came at all, would be made through many trivial incidents and in devious ways. Whatever an Elizabethan audience might have thought, for the modern reader the supernatural incidents are only formal devices which make for economy and concentration. By introducing the ghost of Hamlet's father, Shakespeare dispenses with many incidents which have for him no dramatic significance, so that he can give an intenser picture of Hamlet's mind than he would otherwise have been able to do, and the ghost comes appropriately to the man who is disturbed by metaphysical doubts and broods on 'To be or not to be'. The witches in *Macbeth*, too, have the same dramatic relevancy. But for them the dormant ambition of Macbeth would probably have never been awakened into activity, and so by sacrificing the superficial realism of fact, Shakespeare secures the greater realism of character.

It is on this basis that the relation between truth and poetic beauty, between art and life, is to be judged. Great revolutions in social life may or may not be reflected in art; an age of political decadence may produce great artists, and of two poets, equally great, one may respond to philosophical and scientific thinking more readily than the other. Any attempt to regard art as an

offshoot of socio-economic changes, or to make it a mere means to propaganda loses sight of the fact that art is not art unless it has the right form. But subject to this primary limitation, it must also be remembered that beauty is not complete unless it is based on truth, that it cannot fully satisfy the aesthetic sense unless it also persuades the reason. Reason ordinarily deals with abstract generalities, but when it is dominated by the imagination, the universal idea is found implicit in the sensible individual. The artist's portrait can glide into the mind only if reason feels that what is being presented is living and has, therefore, to be accepted without demur. The liveliness or truth of art does not consist in the superficial resemblance we call verisimilitude; it does not seek support in facts as history has to do, neither does it enunciate general laws in the manner of science. If we are to appreciate Shakespeare's dramas, we must believe in love as heroic, chastity as noble and evil as real. Shakespeare does not argue these things out syllogistically or inductively nor can it be said that he is original in his conception of heroism, virtue, and vice. He portrays an Antony, an Othello, an Iago, an Isabella or a Desdemona. These characters (and whatever else we may mean by 'form') carry conviction by their vividness, and our reason is prevailed on to accept the intuitions of the imagination. If, however, we follow Bernard Shaw in thinking that Antony is a 'hog' and Othello a 'noble savage',[8] that they are dominated by the proprietary instinct or if we believe that Isabella's chastity is too cold and Iago's

malignity too monstrous to be human, then the dramas have failed as works of art, for our recalcitrant reason has not been disarmed. The failure may be due to our inadequacy or to Shakespeare's incompetence. But the fundamental connexion between art and life should not be lost sight of. Art gives an insight into the deeper recesses of reality and its methods must be different in many ways from those employed by philosophers and scientists, or by practical men not interested in speculation. Adapting Bernard Shaw's language in a different context, we may say that the artist's vision is abnormally 'normal'; he sees things not as other people do; he sees them *better*.

Roger Fry puts forward the plea that the vitality of art is different from the vitality of real men and women, and his views may be taken as representative of those who find significance only in form. He seems to think that if images of art give exact likenesses of living things or even express human emotions about things, it is likely that they themselves will be devoid of life. On the other hand, some images give us a strong illusion that they possess a life of their own; they somehow seize the principle of life in things, they are not modified to suit any human preconception and have no moral quality. Their vitality, therefore, is the inner energy of the thing itself and is quite indifferent to our demands on it or our sense of values; it is an illusion of life, arising out of rhythms which are free because they are undirected. This theory is open to several grave objections. It is

made up mostly of negative concepts and seems to make distortion or abnormality an end in itself. It is true that mere lifelikeness does not make a picture artistic, but that is no reason why a work of art that is lifelike should on that ground alone be inartistic, nor is there any reason for thinking that it would be artistic if it were not like life.

All art is bound to express the artist's 'human emotions' about things. Even if we leave aside the question whether the artist, a human being, can have any emotion that is non-human, what is Fry's criterion about the distinctive quality of art? It must seize 'the principle of life in things'. Now this principle of life must be what the artist finds in things, and it must be coloured by the artist's pre-conception about life; even his distortions cannot but be guided by what he thinks and feels; technical accomplishments apart, the difference in feeling and thinking is one of the causes why two works of art on the same subject are so dissimilar. Roger Fry's own examples and his comments on them do not bear out his theory that vital art should be undirected by any human idea. Speaking of the terra-cotta head of a pig in New Guinea, he says that the art there is a vivid evocation of the principle of the animal's life. If art is an illusion which is not subject to scientific analysis or proof, what can this principle of the animal's life be except the artist's idea, and what can it consist of except some hidden qualities he finds in nature? Roger Fry refers to Rouault's portrait of John the Baptist as an example of the vital

energy of art and says that no one can deny that it is inspired by a sombre *energy*.[9] Such a criticism seems to give away Fry's case altogether. Rouault must have thought that John the Baptist's character possessed certain distinguishing qualities, and these are certainly human (emotional or intellectual) qualities rather than formal features; otherwise he might as well have named his portrait Barabbas or Pontius Pilate. His formative imagination must have been as much directed by that idea (of sombreness, according to Roger Fry) as the Lion's Head in the Greek temple of Minerva was directed by the idea of ferocity and dignity or Fra Bartolommeo's *St Mark* by the idea of nobility and grandeur.

The relationship between art and life may be correctly envisaged if for a moment we consider form and content separately. The form that the artist gives to his impressions is a semblance, an illusion; it is 'virtual' rather than actual. It creates a world of its own which produces an impression of life although it is devoid of flesh and blood. And the more formal the art, the greater is its illusory quality. But the ideas expressed by the artist are ideas about life; they may be nothing more than a mere mood, they may be very tenuous emotions or they may make up a well-reasoned philosophy of life. Whatever the content of art may be, it is related to the artist's thoughts and emotions and must, therefore, be closely knit to life, and as poetry expresses itself in words with meanings, it is the most vital of all the arts. The artist sees visions and thinks in images; he, therefore, makes

short work of customary and conventional meanings, ignores the surface-values of things and penetrates to the heart of reality. As Bergson points out, 'art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself'.[10]

V

The question that has now to be faced is: Is art which brushes aside symbols that are blatantly utilitarian totally amoral? Or, just as it removes everything that veils reality in order to have a more direct vision of reality itself, does it eschew didacticism only in the interests of a purer form of moral teaching? It may be said that poetry and the arts reject all utilitarian symbols and create forms in which it is possible to take disinterested pleasure and in which we can appreciate beauty as something self-contained and self-sufficient. This involves a two-fold process: an artistic product — it may be a simple bowl or a personal lyric or a complex work like *King Lear* — first of all puts the blanket upon our immediate practical interests, and then, secondly, it enables us to step out into a world of reality lying beyond us. Here, too, the critic can make a distinction between form and content which are fused into each other. We first identify ourselves with the living form before us and then penetrate below to the ideological content. This

identification or empathy results in an enlargement of our sympathies and a sharpening of our insight into life, and we can also realize the force of ideas which, if presented through argument, would have left us cold. But art does not merely broaden our minds; it also enhances our capacity for intenser realization. The poetic thrill enables us to 'find sweep in the concise and depth in the clear'.

This exaltation and widening of the spirit is the common effect of all the arts, for all the arts express some ideas about the significance and value of life and all of them present symbols which are characterized by intense vitality. It may, however, be said that poetry is more moral than the other arts, because its materials are words charged with meanings. Even an urn 'teases us out of thought' and asserts the importance of beauty as a form of value. A complex product of the imagination, such as a drama or a novel, has a richer content of moral significance because words are more evocative than clay. An artist can no more escape giving a moral bias to his poetry than a man can escape from his own shadow. As pointed out above, those who brush aside utilitarian symbols or eschew didacticism in its cruder forms only proclaim that utility should not be interpreted narrowly and that there are things more valuable than those that ordinarily take the eye and have the price.

It must not, however, be forgotten that although all symbols in art are, in the ultimate analysis, moral, not all moral ideas need be artistic. It is only those ideas which have taken shape in the crucible of the imagination

that can have value as art. Here, once again, form must have primacy over content. Sometimes an artist starts with certain specific doctrines which he wants to preach, but when the work of art is finished, the idea that emerges, although indubitably his own, is different from — and possibly greater than — those he started with. An example taken from literature that is professedly propagandist will best illustrate the point. Shaw wrote *Mrs Warren's Profession* to prove that prostitution is caused by poverty and under-employment, 'that the only way for a woman to provide for herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her'.[11] But when Shaw's imagination took charge of the subject, it created not only Mrs Warren, but her partner Sir George Crofts, her erstwhile lover Praed and his son Frank, and above all, her daughter Vivie. These characters who have a life and personality of their own easily outgrew the author's original intention, and although there is a striking account of Kitty Warren's early life and although she makes out an able defence of herself, the drama is less about the mother's profession than about the daughter's discovery of the squalid base on which capitalist civilization rests. It would be absurd to think that the drama is pure form in which the content has been absorbed beyond recognition, but the content is what the form has thrown into relief and not what the artist might have as a philosopher sought to prove; it is related to his philosophy, but it has an individual significance of its own.

CHAPTER XII

Poetry and Other Arts

I

ALL enquiry into the nature of artistic activity should begin with architecture, 'the mother of the arts', because architecture is perhaps the earliest of the arts and because of all arts, architecture is least connected with the intricacies of human psychology. It is, therefore, primitive in a double sense. Man probably first built himself a house before he could decorate it or sing or dance in it. In architecture man learns to build with a due sense of proportion, balance and depth, and these are purely formal concepts. A beautiful building is one that has, above everything else, a good design. It does not sing or talk, and if it is embellished with ornamental friezes, columns, or cornices, or with mural paintings, mosaics, or carved figures, these are later additions which do not take away from the formal, non-human character of architecture.

Although the beauty of architecture is purely formal, its purpose is utilitarian. Buildings are meant as dwelling-places, and even a church or temple or mosque serves certain practical needs which largely determine the architect's design. No one erects a magnificent building which has no living room or a church that is unsuited for purposes of prayer. It is easy to distinguish the architectural

pattern of a temple from that of a mosque, but it must be remembered that a not unimportant point of difference is that a temple is intended to house a deity and a mosque is the place of prayer for people who do not worship images. Architecture shows, too, that art is responsive to social changes and expresses faithfully the ideas of a particular time. Modern architecture, for example, is largely determined by the needs of a people who are every day becoming more and more industrialized. Some modern churches have been combined with commercial structures and the church of today must differ from the Church of ancient times when it was not merely a place of worship but also a refuge for the poor, a seat of learning, and a centre of social life. A study of architecture leads to the conclusion that the artistic impulse might have been rooted in practical needs and not seldom good art may be that which, among other things, best serves utilitarian ends, or at least, one mark of badness in art may be its failure to serve these ends.

The above argument must, however, be taken with caution. A house is intended as a dwelling-place, but not certainly a monument which is a symbol of pure art. It may be that a monument is meant to celebrate a victory or it may mark the site of a king's burial, but these are not practical needs, and the design of the architect is no more controlled by such extraneous purpose than is the beauty of the monument dependent on the occasion which it is intended to celebrate. Even in buildings

that are designed for some practical needs — a palace or a tower or a church — the beauty depends largely on embellishments or decorations which are foreign to its utilitarian purpose. This is true of all architectural work but most true of Byzantine art, in which beauty consists largely in what is mere adornment. The Corinthian mode of architecture does not differ from the Doric mode in being better adapted to practical needs; both serve some practical needs, and then strive to attain perfection in a world of forms. It seems that beauty is at the same time utilitarian and formal. Santa Sophia is a place of worship, but it is also something more. The artist's head is in the clouds, although his feet are firmly planted on the earth.

Another remarkable feature of architecture is its dependence on the materials it employs; it is no wonder that with change in materials the basic principles of architecture also undergo change. 'All building of a permanent character has been governed by four basic structural principles — the post and lintel, the wooden truss, the masonry arch and the modern steel skeleton — each of which, in evolving, gave the art new impetus.'[1] If Roman architecture made less use of columns than the Greek, that is because Rome had discovered the use of cement. It is useful to remember all this, because all forms of art depend on the materials used, and their capacities are partly determined by these materials.

It is because of the materials employed by architecture that it is the least mimetic of all the arts. The decorations

in a building may include designs of flowers or birds, but architecture by itself does not and cannot directly express any human emotions or represent scenes from human life. The Egyptian pyramid may suggest vastness or Santa Sophia may arouse a feeling of grandeur, but neither can express any complex emotion. The *Taj-mahal* at Agra, one of the architectural wonders of the modern world, was built by Emperor Shahjahan to commemorate the death of his wife, and poets, notably Rabindranath Tagore, have waxed eloquent over the theme. But except for the dark crypt where the dead bodies of the Emperor and his consort are laid, there is nothing in the mausoleum itself which might express or even suggest death or sorrow. The monument (except for the crypt, which is not an organic part of it) might as well have been raised to celebrate their marriage. Possibly architects in all ages have felt the limitations of their craft and realized that art should express human emotions and represent human life, and that is why architecture generally combines itself with sculpture and painting which are adapted for this purpose. A significant example is the Egyptian sphinx in which architecture almost becomes sculpture.

II

Just as architecture is the beautiful arrangement of certain materials, so dancing means only the graceful manipulation of parts of the human body. Here, too,

we have a purely formal art in which beauty need not be traced to any human significance. Dancing is a spontaneous activity of the artistic impulse manifested in rhythmic movements of the muscles and limbs of the body and shows the fundamental divergence between artistic and ordinary pursuits. The movements of the body in normal life have scarcely anything artistic about them. It is when these movements are stimulated, regulated and controlled by the laws of rhythm that they become beautiful. Dancing reveals also the dependence of art on material, because other things being equal, the more beautiful the dancer's body, the more graceful will the dancing be.

In a sense, dancing is even a 'purer' form of art than architecture, because like architecture, it derives its appeal from the manipulation of materials, but unlike architecture it serves no utilitarian ends. According to the famous dancer Isadora Duncan, movement in dancing 'is lyrical and emotional expression, which can have nothing to do with words'. She refers appreciatively to the 'new world' of forms created by Rodin and speaks with contempt of the crowd that asked, 'Where is his head?' Or, 'Where is her arm?'[2] In her opinion, 'this is not the thing itself but a symbol — a conception of the ideal of life'. But Isadora Duncan herself looks upon dancing as the divine expression of the human spirit through the body's movement,[3] which means that the formal qualities of dancing have an ideological content. We know that some popular dances like the Kite dance

or the dance of the Snake-charmer are frankly mimetic; in primitive times dancers danced a battle before fighting it, and there are dances which seem to have originally been intended to accompany fertility rites, to enact the spirit of life manifested in vegetation. Amongst some peoples, dancing has a practical aspect; its orgies help to exorcise evil spirits, and as it has erotic suggestions, it is supposed to assist courtship. Isadora Duncan composed a dance to FitzGerald's *Omar Khayyam*, and her principal aim as a dancer was to give expression to the spirit of ancient Athenian tragedy and of new America.[4] A remarkable example of symbolism is to be found in the *Natarāja* dance of India, in which the dancer representing Śiva dances out the world-process of creation, preservation, and annihilation. Rabindranath Tagore, too, gave dance-recitals of many of his lyrical plays in which the spirit of the dramas would be expressed through the medium of dances — and songs.

And songs? Cannot the dances exist by themselves? That is the question that would naturally suggest itself to the critic. In Tagore's plays, it seems that the dances are only illustrations of the music and the dialogue. The reverse seems to be the truth about the *Natarāja* dance and also of other dances in which dancing is the thing and music or poetical dialogue or any other accompaniment only a commentary or an illustration. But what is important from our point of view here is that even dancing is not mere ecstasy of movement; it, too, is symbolical, for it tries to express an idea, to embody

a spiritual impulse. The content of all art is emotion or idea, and dancing is no exception. In other words, there can be no art that is absolutely formal. That is why — just as architecture allies itself to painting and sculpture — so also dancing takes the help of music and develops into drama. It is, indeed, true that if we read too much of hidden meaning into the movements of the body, we shall miss the formal beauty of art, but it cannot be denied that dancing strives after the evocation of such meaning, and, viewed in itself, is an incomplete art.

Much the same comment may be made of music, which is often looked upon as the most perfect of all the arts, — as the art which all other arts try to approach. What is the essential characteristic of music? It is the creation of 'forms in virtual time' or of 'significant forms in sound'. The painter has his world to interpret, the musician has not. Henry Hadow, who defines music as significant form in sound, proceeds to explain his definition by means of an illustration from poetry. 'Every line in a great poem, apart from its value as interpreting or revealing some thought of which it is the articulation, has its own flow of rhythm, its own play of vowel-sounds, its own strength of construction, its own felicity of phrase. Now suppose that the meaning was not something which these embodied, but something of which they were the constituents; the line would then be not poetry but music.'[5] He suggests, therefore, that music should be studied on the side of significant form rather than on that of emotional content. It is in the

fitness of things that Beethoven called his great compositions First Symphony, Second Symphony, etc. and did not give them any descriptive title, for such titles would be misleading. Indeed, if other musicians have given more tell-tale names, it is not with any critical purpose, but only to give hints to the pianist. 'A boy,' says Schumann 'will find one story in the notes, a man another, while the composer intended neither of them.' It is because in music, the most non-representational of all arts, the mind is completely freed from thraldom to the world of emotions and ideas that it is so entrancing and so easily produces the hypnotic effect which other arts aim at, but never can achieve. That is why some philosophers claim that it embodies the very rhythm of the universe, that it is an expression of the Will itself.

But this is only one side of the picture. Beautiful poetry is written to be sung or musically recited; what is more important in the present context is that music also takes the help of words with meanings, or attempts literary characterization through melodic subtlety. We can distinguish between Don Giovanni and Leporello even by the character of their music, and Bernard Shaw claims further that 'the chief merit of the thematic structure of the Ring is the mastery with which the dramatic play of the ideas is reflected in the contrapuntal play of the themes'.[6] It is true that Shaw's criticism of Mozart and Wagner is too literary, but what is relevant to our argument is that the ultimate aim of music is to produce a mental state in which ideas play an incipient but not

an unimportant part. Wagner's dream of music-drama as a fusion of all the arts — painting and literature, dance and song, action and orchestra — may be fantastic, and the distinction drawn by critics like M Bertrand[7] between pure music that expresses emotion in a vague and general way and dramatic music in which poetry, the language of intellect, intervenes in a direct fashion, is certainly critically untenable. But the important point for consideration is that all musical composition aims at producing (if not directly expressing) human emotion, and Beethoven, the greatest creator of pure music, called his sonatas pathetic or passionate although he could not specify the kind of passion or pathos they expressed or evoked. Even a non-musical ear can catch the difference between a dirge and a marriage-hymn, and it does not require a virtuoso to say that Mozart excels in comedy and Wagner in tragedy. The truth seems to be that as music frees itself more and more from the content of meaning, it achieves greater and greater intensity, but it sacrifices largeness and complexity and even subtlety, for it cannot specify or analyse the pathos and passion it creates, or in other words, music seems to yearn for absorption into an art which, while retaining as much of its hypnotic intensity as it can, will also give expression to its emotional-intellectual content.

III

Sculpture and painting may be looked upon as essentially different from music because they seem to refer

immediately to a subject-matter which they portray — and transform. But even here critics of art, especially modern critics of art, think that the aim of sculpture and painting is only to create significant form — in colours and lines and in clay and marble. Following T. E. Hulme, we may divide the productions of these arts into two broad classes — representational (vital or naturalistic), and abstract (geometrical or mechanical).[8] The artists belonging to these classes are impelled by motives basically different. The representational artist imitates (using the word in a very loose sense) life as he finds it around him and tries to give his works a human significance. The best examples of this type of art are to be found in Greek sculpture and in Renaissance painting. As against these there are the geometrical artists who try to achieve purely formal perfection of lines and volumes. There is a touch of unearthliness in abstractionist art even when such art is professedly representational, such as Cézanne's *Self-Portrait with Palette* or Epstein's bust of T. E. Hulme. The difference in aim is reflected, too, in diversity of craftsmanship; for example, in representational art the lines and volumes are soft and flexible whereas in geometrical art they are hard and rigid, but more important than these divergences in craftsmanship are the basic unlikenesses in mood and in attitude to art and life.

Modern exponents of geometrical art go beyond Hulme and claim that all art is fundamentally geometrical and the representational character of realistic art

is only an accident that has nothing to do with its value as art. The arguments of those who think that all artistic work must involve some distortion have already been touched on in Chapter XI in course of the discussion on the relation between art and life. Here it will be enough to examine the validity of the claim that painting and sculpture only create forms and do nothing else, that even though an abstractionist-artist may go to nature for his subject, he is not interested in the subject as such but only in the form of the subject-matter—its roundness or tallness or thinness. Plato, who may be looked upon as the first exponent of abstractionist painting or sculpture, thus outlined the basic principles of visual craftsmanship:

'I do not mean by beauty of form such beauty as that of animals or pictures, which the many would suppose to be my meaning; but, says the argument, understand me to mean straight lines and circles, and the plane or solid figures which are formed out of them by turning-lathes and rulers and measures of angles; for these I affirm to be not only relatively beautiful, like other things, but they are eternally and absolutely beautiful, and they have peculiar pleasures, quite unlike the pleasures of scratching.'[9]

It is in this spirit that Cézanne wrote:

'Represent nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone, all placed in perspective.'

There is no doubt that all the non-literary arts achieve formal beauty, but do not painting and sculpture and

music also strive after the expression of some emotion or idea? If they do, why should we think that such expressiveness is alien to art? 'Art's expressiveness,' says a modern critic, 'does not describe, portray or analyse — it sings, it dances, it excites!'[10] It excites in the spectator or hearer the emotions or ideas which stimulated the creator. Van Gogh's *The Yellow Chair* may be a masterpiece of design; but is its beauty entirely formal? One peculiarity of this chair is that its legs remind one of the outspread legs of a man. This is what makes the design expressive and vital; it is because of this that the picture becomes a characteristic product of an age in which the artist is painfully conscious of the progressive mechanization of humanity.

The expressiveness of art is strikingly vivid, but it is also too broad and indeterminate when compared with the subtler and richer significance of poetry. 'Because of the nature of the material in which he (the poet) works,' says P. C. Wilson, 'he can express more than the painter and describe more than the musician.'[11] Great as painting and sculpture are, like music, they leave upon us a sense of incompleteness, for although the figures and scenes drawn by them seem to speak out, their lips are sealed. When we read Pater's description of Mona Lisa and are told that as Leda she was the mother of Helen of Troy and that as St Anne she was the mother of Mary, we feel that literature is giving completeness to what painting has suggested. A critic like Clive Bell might think that this is introducing literary irrelevancies

into art and that in thus giving a poetical or symbolical interpretation of art, we depart from the worship of pure form,[12] but pure form is charged with meaning and that meaning cannot be dissociated from life.

The same conclusion becomes inescapable if we turn from vital to geometrical art in which, as in the paintings of Picasso or the sculpture of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, natural forms are distorted beyond recognition. What is necessary to remember is that even such art, distorted as it may be, is not without its ideological or literary content. Critics are agreed that Byzantine art, which is more devoted to form than 'vital' art, is especially suited for the expression of a feeling for infinity. T. E. Hulme thinks that the art of classical Greece and Renaissance Europe expresses a philosophy that is essentially optimistic and looks upon life as a flux whereas abstractionist art, whether of India, Byzantium or twentieth-century Europe, is attuned to a pessimistic attitude to life which looks beyond the impermanence of nature to what is durable, rigid and eternal.[13] Picasso's paintings give us the most fantastic shapes that anyone could dream of, but generally these express a feeling of horror and disaster and these are human feelings. Possibly it is to such deeper meaning that Clive Bell refers when he speaks of art as giving an insight into ultimate reality,[14] but this sense of ultimate reality, although it is indistinguishable from the form of art, is also something that is beyond formal properties, beyond colour and line and clay and volume.

Admirers of form in art say that the visual arts—possibly they would extend their theory to all non-literary arts—state what they have to say; they do not suggest anything beyond their statements, because such suggestions are the proper province of literature. In support of their thesis, they refer confidently to Paul Gauguin's association with the symbolists which was broken off, because Symbolism, they argue, is essentially a literary movement, and although Gauguin remained a friend of Mallarmé, he must have realized that there is little that is in common between their crafts. But although it is true that painting and the other arts differ from poetry, it will be wrong to assume that they are not symbolical. These arts 'state' formal properties and manipulate materials, but the total effect is emotional-intellectual as well as formal. The formal arts reach forward to something lying beyond them, and poetry begins where painting or sculpture ends.

IV

Lessing thinks that succession of time is the department of the poet as space is that of the painter and that as painting seizes life at a particular moment, it can only represent co-existence. But as musical creations also are creations in time, and critics find movement in pictures, too,—in Van Gogh's pictures, for example,—such a distinction cannot give us the secret of poetry. It seems that the real point of difference between poetry

and the other arts is to be found in the peculiarity of the materials employed by them. Poetry cannot be as descriptive as painting nor as intense as music. But in music and painting human emotions can be expressed only distantly; they make formal statements which project symbolical meanings. Speaking of the difference between poetry and painting, Lessing pertinently points out:

'When the poet personifies abstractions, they are sufficiently characterized by their names and the actions which he represents them as performing.'

'The artist does not command these means. He is therefore compelled to add to his personified abstractions some emblems by which they may be easily recognized. These emblems, since they are different and have different significations, constitute them allegorical figures.

'A female form, with a bridle in her hand; another, leaning against a pillar, are, in art, allegorical beings. On the contrary, with the poets, Temperance and Constancy are not allegorical beings, but personified abstractions.'[15]

If we leave out of consideration art that is professedly allegorical, we find that although the human significance evoked by form inheres in the materials, it is only dimly visible in the elements constituting the work of art. If we break up a picture into its lines and a musical performance into its basic sounds, there will be no meaning in the component parts. That is why although in music and painting we have a greater sense of unity

than we can have in the more diffused art of poetry, there is in poetry a more complex harmony in which the parts are as significant as the whole. And poetry is in a sense the greatest of the arts because it has the richest insight into human life. How human significance gives vitality to art may be best seen if we compare the following poetical passages which deal with flowers that by themselves are inanimate:

> I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows
> Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
> (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii, i. 249-51)

This is a picturesque description, but no one would call it high poetry; the human significance in it is too trivial. But let us compare it with the following passage from *The Winter's Tale:*

> daffodils,
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath; pale prime-roses,
> That die unmarried, ere they can behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
> Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and
> The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
> The flower-de-luce being one. O! these I lack

To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er!

(iv, iii.118-29)

This description is lofty poetry because it takes warmth and passion and vigour from Perdita's life and character. We may go forward to the following passage from *Hamlet*:

There's fennel for you, and columbines; there's rue for you; and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. O! you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy; I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died. (iv, v, 179-86)

Or, we may cite the following stanza from Keats's *Ode To A Nightingale*:

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalméd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer-eves.

If these two passages are great poetry, it is less because of any formal peculiarity than because of the significance

of the human emotions and ideas displayed in them. The first reflects the sad and enigmatic story of Ophelia's life and the second, which is less subtle, gives us an idea of Keats's absorption in the world of beauty.

It may be interesting to compare these descriptions of flowers with Cézanne's painting — *Tulips and Apples*. The picture is comparable, if poetry is at all comparable with painting, with the first and least poetical of the four passages, and what is noticeable is that neither the painting nor the description in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has much human significance. It has been claimed that Cézanne's paintings of still life portray stability and sadness, but these ideas are suggested rather than expressed. It must be admitted that as description *Tulips and Apples* is more impressive than Shakespeare's early verse; it is precise, neat, and visually vivid. The distinctness with which every colour is presented and the simple design which eschews detailed ornamentation are qualities not easily attainable in poetry. As already suggested, the difference between poetry and painting is ultimately traceable to the capacities of the materials used by the two arts. Painting, exploiting materials like lines and colours, can make its products more monumental than poetical creations which employ such a complex and flexible medium as human language. But painting rarely stops with the creation of linear harmony or the richness of colour effects. It often wants to express or suggest some mood or idea, gaiety or sadness, stability or motion, and it is here that poetry has primacy over painting.

Some of Cézanne's portraits of his wife convey a sense of sadness, plaintiveness and tenderness, but if we compare them with any literary portrait of a sad and pensive woman, we can notice the difference between the capacities of the two arts. We shall look in vain in literature for the strong, formalized design or the smoothly-flowing curves distinguishing Cézanne's pictures, but no painter can represent the intricate and subtle workings of a woman's heart with the precision or richness that we can expect from a poet.

Twentieth century painting and sculpture are supposed to represent an attitude to life which may broadly be described as pessimistic. This attitude is expressed, too, in twentieth-century poetry, notably in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. If we compare Eliot's poem with any specimen of modern art, we shall notice that here there are ambiguities, ambivalences, subtleties and complexities which cannot be found anywhere outside poetry. We shall reach the same conclusion if we compare Yeats's poems on Byzantium with Byzantine mosaic or sculpture. The poems as well as the mosaics and the sculptures express a mental state and they have well-defined forms. But in art the form is more important than the idea which it suggests in a vague and general way, whereas in poetry the form is completely fused in the idea which it expresses in all its implications. Yeats's poems may be less concentrated and less vivid than Byzantine art, but their range of reference is wider, their meaning more intricate and possibly more profound.

Line and colour and sounds are rigid and devoid of the rich connotative significance of words, and although architecture has changed with the change of basic material from lintel and post to steel and the course of music has been profoundly affected by improvements in material resources, such as the establishment of the modern orchestra, the materials by themselves have no content of meaning except the capacity of serving as vague, general symbols. But poetry employs words which are also used for man's manifold needs, theoretical and practical, and which besides have a history and an aroma of their own. To this complex significance the poet adds a meaning which is his personal contribution and without which poetry would cease to be poetry. We need not refer to such tell-tale words as 'vandalism' or 'quixotic' or 'pundit', but when a character in *The Waste Land* says:

> 'Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May.
> Goonight.
> Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
> Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good
> night, good night.'

it is easy to see that the significance of the speech is enriched by echoes from *Hamlet*. Imitations and echoes are to be found in other arts, too — in music, painting, sculpture and architecture. But such imitations and echoes are usually formal and stylistic reminiscences

without the complexity of significance we find in the above passage, in which we are insistently reminded of the parallelism and difference between the speaker's situation and Ophelia's.

It has already been pointed out that Indian aesthetics looks upon poetry as consisting of a body of sounds and a soul of meaning, and meanings in poetry have, on this view, two stages — the primary and the secondary. The primary or stated meaning is employed in practical life, history or philosophy, and although in poetry the secondary or projected meaning is dominant, the primary meaning is not lost; it inheres in the secondary meaning and illuminates it. It is this complexity of meaning that the other arts can never attain. They have only a body of sounds or lines and a meaning which these evoke. They lack the primary meaning and thus the secondary meaning is vague and tenuous. Hard materials may help to express an attitude of rigidity and soft lines may suggest a pleasant or pathetic view of life, but a particular piece of material has little significance of its own.

Another point of distinction between poetry and the other arts is its greater spirituality. Although poetry was originally composed to be sung, its appeal is much less aural than that of music. Similarly, poetry draws pictures, but these pictures are not visible to the physical eye. In the opinion of Herbert Read — and many other critics — '..... the plastic arts are visual arts, operating through the eyes, expressing and conveying a state of

feeling. If we have *ideas* to express, the proper medium is language. The artist is impervious to his ideas at his peril, but his business is not with the presentation of such ideas, but with the communication of his emotional reaction to them.'[16] It is not very clear why an artist, if he does not express ideas, should not also be impervious to them. Or, in other words, it may pertinently be asked if a state of feeling can be conveyed properly when it is cut off from its roots in ideas. It would be confusing to suggest that Auden's *Spain* deals with ideas and Picasso's *Guernica* conveys emotion or a state of feeling, or that there is more of ideological significance in a lyric poem than in Gauguin's *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* A simpler way of approaching the problem would be to say that all the arts try to express feelings and ideas, but although the more sensuous arts like painting and music have greater vividness and possibly greater concentration and intensity, it is poetry which can give the widest and the most intricate range of significance, because words alone have primary as well as secondary meanings. It is here that poetry succeeds in achieving what the other arts only strive after, and it is in this sense that modifying Pater's dictum, we may say that all the arts aspire towards the condition of poetry.

CHAPTER XIII

The Solution of the Antinomies

I

ART is an entrancing but baffling experience, and it is no wonder that many puzzling, often contradictory, statements are made about it. The most important of these have been listed in Chapter IX, and although the problems posed there have been discussed throughout this book, it will be profitable to re-examine in a final chapter some of these antinomies so that we may get a clearer idea of the workings of the artistic imagination. The discussion may start with the question: How far is poetry personal and how far impersonal? It is generally believed that poetry and the arts originate in personal emotions. In real life these emotions are subject to a thousand inhibitions and express themselves in violent, sporadic outbursts. There is no lack of intensity but the expression is confused, ill-organized. Art supplies man with its own vehicle of expression, which is different from the modes used in life. It need hardly be pointed out that in real life we do not paint or sing our emotions. Although it is true that we express them in words — the medium used by the poet or the dramatist, yet it is a far cry from the halting speech of everyday life to the golden words of poetry. Even Wordsworth, who thought that poetry is written in a 'selection

of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation', had to admit that not all real language but only a 'selection' of it is adapted to the purposes of poetry. Selection involves heightening and this means that the language of poetry is fundamentally different from the language of conversation. What is important for our purpose is that the expressive medium of the arts — paint, marble, clay or heightened metrical speech — imposes a distance between the original emotion and its transformation by the imagination.

Poetry and the arts, therefore, are expressions of recollected emotions, of emotions contemplated from a distance. The poetry of pain does not give us pain as it is actually felt but of pain as it is imaginatively surveyed. Can we say that it is an expression of sympathy with pain? Such a description would be misleading, because sympathy with pain is an ordinary human emotion and its normal expression would be as unpoetical as the expression of pain itself. The Indian philosopher K. C. Bhattacharyya says that the aesthetic feeling of pain is analogous to sympathy for sympathy with pain.[1] But such a feeling would be too tenuous; being too far removed, it cannot have the warmth and colour of life. The poetry of pain has the urgency of pain but also the aloofness of sympathy for sympathy with pain. The antinomy between the personal and the impersonal features of art may be resolved if we relate it to the union of form and content. The content of art is constituted of personal emotions and personal ideas, but once

it is endowed with form, it acquires a life of its own and the poet is only a spectator of the emotions he once felt in real life. When Browning lost his wife, he felt deeply as a husband, but when this emotion took shape in the poem *Prospice*, although his emotion retained its old personal warmth, his poetic imagination also removed it from the sphere of personal agony and transformed it into an idealized experience. We can watch this process of transformation in the intensely personal poem — Lamb's *Old Familiar Faces*. Lamb makes no secret of the fact that the poem embalms personal emotions and his experiences of Coleridge, Lloyd and Ann Simmons. In the poem, the playmates and cronies exist only in a ghostly world created by the poet, and he himself is just a part of that phantasmagoria. The incantatory effect of 'All, all are gone, the old familiar faces' reinforces the impression that we have been switched into a new world which is made out of the poet's experiences and yet transcends them. Even when the poet returns to the real world and expresses a wish that his friend were born a brother — a wish rooted in the unsympathetic conduct of his own brother John Lamb — we feel that such a wish could materialize only in a world of dreams conjured up by his imagination. If one takes out of the poem the poet's personal experiences, the residue would be sheer emptiness, but the total poem is a vision in which all that is purely personal has been washed away and which all can appreciate because all of us look back wistfully to a vanished past.

How poetry reveals a greater personality hidden behind the experiences of the moment may be more effectively studied in Newman's *Lead, Kindly Light.* The poem was written in 1833, a year after the passing of the Reform Bill, when Newman's mind was disturbed by Liberalism which was invading not only politics but also the Church. He was returning after a foreign tour in course of which he had gone to Rome, and although Monsignore (later Cardinal) Wiseman had asked him to stay on, he had declined, saying, 'We have work to do in England.'[2] Newman was yet far from his conversion, which came twelve years later; by his 'work' he possibly meant freeing the Anglican Church from its taint of Liberalism. He was aching to return home, but his ship was becalmed and he fell ill. It was on this occasion that he wrote the beautiful lyric: *Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom.* The poem expresses his mood in 1833, but it has a more poignant applicability to the agonized misgiving of which he was conscious several years later between 1839 and 1841. That is to say, although the poem grew out of a specific experience, his imagination had gone into the deepest recesses of his soul as yet unfathomed by the conscious intelligence, and the poem is not an expression of flitting fancies but a stable and perennial embodiment of spiritual doubt, and all of us — Churchmen as well as atheists — may participate in the poet's experience in this depersonalized form. The imagination eschews whatever might have belonged to that particular moment,

and the symbolism of a journey which all men may undertake as also the references to darkness and light, to 'moor and fen' and 'crag and torrent', help to give vividness and objectivity to a purely personal experience.

We shall arrive at the same conclusion if we proceed from the other extreme and examine a poem that is professedly objective and impersonal. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is made up mostly of symbols taken from anthropology, and even the plan of the book is based on Miss J. L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. The poem makes references to drought and rain, to sterility and potency and also to vegetation-ceremonies and the Grail legend, which Maud Bodkin, quoting Jung, says, 'accomplish a translation of the primordial image into the language of the present'.[3] Images and tags culled from different sources seem to make the poem a shapeless mass, and the reader might well be confused and annoyed. If, however, the poem produces an impression of living unity, it is primarily due — and this is what psycho-analytic criticism ignores — to the poet's personal emotion or idea which gives a new orientation to the odds and ends collected from different sources and welds them into a rounded whole. The poet is the speaker who 'will show you fear in a handful of dust'; he identifies himself, too, with Tiresias and 'what Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem'.[4] It is true, indeed, that in projecting himself into Tiresias, the poet has, first of all, to deliver himself from the limitations of his personal emotion, but if poetry is to differ from science or

philosophy, its roots in personality must never be lost sight of. The poet first feels the sense of frustration in his own peculiar way and then only can he imaginatively transform himself into Tiresias.

II

As art is both personal and impersonal, it is also both individual and universal. The individuality of a work of art is easy to understand; every work of art is distinctive, because it has a form which is not like the form of any other work of art, however similar the basic ideas might be. Fables all over the world teach the same lessons, but every fable has its unique form, and that is why fables have a deathless appeal. Cézanne drew many portraits of himself; but each of these portraits is a unique product, because each has its own form and each expresses a peculiar mood. We love characters in a drama or a novel only when we feel that they have an individual life, and one person does not talk or behave as any other person would do, and if Shakespeare is greater than other writers, it is primarily because of this individuality of portraiture.

But this is not the whole truth. If art consisted only of individual forms, it would not have been possible for any reader or spectator to pass into and identify himself with it. It may be profitable here to examine, once again, the nature of this aesthetic identification. How does the poet merge himself in his experiences or the

reader with the poet's poetry? This identification which is at the same time nearer and more distant than sympathy has been called empathy or feeling *into* the form of a thing. Herbert Read illustrates empathy by saying that a spectator with an open mind looking into the Japanese print *The Great Wave* by Katsuchika Hokusai will be absorbed by the sweep of the enormous wave, its upswelling movement rather than think of the poor men in the boats and their danger. 'When,' says he, 'we feel sympathy for the afflicted, we re-enact in ourselves the feelings of others; when we contemplate a work of art, we project ourselves into the form of a work of art, and our feelings are determined by what we find there, by the dimensions we occupy.'[5] It is to be seen that even if we accept the theory of empathy, we have to recognize an element of universality in art, for it would not be possible for us to project ourselves into the form of a work of art unless there were a universal element in it. We should be able to appreciate the enormous sweep of the Great Wave, if only we have an idea of enormousness, and the suggestion may be hazarded that Hokusai's print will have a larger appeal for those who have seen the upswelling movement of a great wave than for those who have no experience of the sea.

Nor are the men in the boat as unimportant as Herbert Read seems to think. It is their danger which makes us realize the terrific grandeur of the wave as contrasted with the littleness of man. That is to say, even the formal beauty of a work of art is related to certain primal

sympathies which are very often drawn upon by artists because they are universally felt. These are the 'great commonplaces' or the 'archetypal patterns', or the primary and basic emotions which Indian aesthetics counts as eight or nine. Because we are all stirred by these emotions, we shall be interested in all the devious ways in which they may be expressed. It may be said that we are interested in the expressions of these emotions in real life, too. But in real life an Othello is just a jealous man, a Macbeth is just a criminally ambitious general and Dushyanta and Sakuntala are just a pair of lovers. Why is it that the Othelloes and the Macbeths and the Dushyantas and the Sakuntalas of art and poetry are more gripping than such characters in real life? Even if we do not admit that art is more arresting than life, we have to concede that it appeals in a different way.

The answer is to be found in the symbolical character of art. Art expresses an idea on a plane of reality different from that to which it belonged, and that is why art can eschew or transform all that is accidental and of merely local and temporary importance; it can also add much that will help to reveal the idea in all its distinctness and purity. In so far as Shakespeare composed *Hamlet* for a particular company and a particular audience, Hamlet had to be fat because Burbage was fat. But Burbage's corpulence has nothing to do with Hamlet as ideally conceived by Shakespeare, and for us the line 'He's fat and scant of breath' is significant only as showing Gertrude's excitement and anxiety which are a striking contrast to the

criminality of her second husband. It is in this way that an individual peculiarity of a particular actor has been lifted into the region of universal forms.

III

From what has already been said it will not be difficult to realize why art is both abstract and concrete. Art is certainly an abstraction, because it is withdrawn from life, and even Keats, who, in concreteness of imagery, is a poet among poets, says, 'This morning Poetry has conquered—I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life — I feel escaped from a new strange and threatening sorrow — and I am thankful for it.'[6] Life, as Abhinavagupta points out, is a flux and our emotions and ideas are like a stream[7], one particular emotion or idea leading to and merging itself in another as time passes on. It is the characteristic of art that it seizes life at a particular moment and then gives it a rigid form with the result that here the stream ceases to flow and the flux hardens into immobility. This aspect of art is referred to in Keats's address to the figures engraved on the Grecian Urn:

> Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
> Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
> She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
> For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

It has been already shown that the expressional medium of art also gives it an abstractionist bias, for music cannot express what is visual nor painting and sculpture what is aural. Then, again, the content of art consists not only of impressions and emotions but also of ideas; and intellectual ideas, although inseparable from form, are abstract rather than concrete. On the other hand, art portrays individuals, and it is, directly or indirectly, sensuous; that is to say, the most salient characteristic of art is its concreteness.

The contradiction may be resolved if, once again, we look at art as symbolization. The simplest definition of a symbol is the one given by R. G. Collingwood: 'A symbol (as the Greek word indicates) is something arrived at by agreement and accepted by the parties to the agreement as valid for a certain purpose.'[8] Collingwood proceeds to argue that symbolism is intellectualized language and thus presupposes the existence of imaginative language. If this view is carried to its furthest point, it will have to be conceded that there can be no symbolism in art and poetry. There is, however, a distinction between the mathematical (the most typically intellectual) symbol and the concrete symbols called forth by the imagination. The only point in common is that they are accepted by the parties concerned, by the poet and his readers in poetry, and the different contestants in an intellectual discussion. This makes the creation of symbols an abstract art; the poet or the artist must concentrate only on those aspects of his actual, concrete experiences

which will go down with his audience. This faculty is critical, and it must accompany all creative effort. It may be that the reader will read meanings into symbols unintended by the poet; but the work of art exists independently of the artist, and the agreement is really between the poet's imagination and the reader's. So far the poetic symbol belongs to the same category as the mathematical and the difference is one of degree rather than of kind. The mathematical symbol is more abstract only in the sense that it is more easily agreed about. But there is one feature of the poetical symbol which sets it in a class apart from intellectual symbols. It is living. Its existence is imaginal, but it has the vigour and complexity of life. All vital things are concrete and so is art. The concreteness of art is best exemplified in those specimens of it which are professedly abstract, in poetry or literature that is intended to preach a doctrine rather than to tell a tale or to express a character. Reference may be made to Shaw's *The Applecart*, which is a drama of ideas rather than of character, but even in this play Shaw's views on the subject of democracy are not expressed through abstract intellectual symbols; rather they are embodied in the shrewdness of King Magnus, the ineptitudes of his ministers, the chicanery of Breakages Ltd and the helplessness of the Powermistress-General.

The other antinomies, with one exception to be discussed separately, may now be easily disposed of, and they have already been dwelt on at length in the preceding

chapters. Art does, indeed, represent nature, because whatever the artist feels and thinks are related to the world around him; these supply him with the content of his creations, and even though the content is modified by the form, it is not, as has been pointed out already, without its influence on the form itself. Even if we leave the content out of consideration for the present, we should remember that form cannot be altogether dissociated from reality. It is made up of parts taken from the world of men and things. A griffin has an eagle's head and wings and a lion's body, and a chimera is a monster with a lion's head, a goat's body and a serpent's tail. The griffin and the chimera are unique objects; they are purely imaginary creatures without any counterpart in life, but the lion and the eagle and the goat and the serpent who contribute to the 'making' of the griffin and the chimera are not unreal. Though the relation between art and life has already been discussed in detail, there is room for one more example. Molière and Bernard Shaw have drawn many satirical sketches of doctors, and we may say that these are not like doctors in real life, but even our aesthetic appreciation of these portraits must rest partly on the fact that in real life much of what we call expert medical science is sheer quackery. If we forget everything about medical science, the doctors in Molière and Shaw would be shadowy creatures. As Gibbon points out, the productions of nature are the materials of art just as agriculture is the foundation of manufactures.[9] The creations of art appear

to be semblances when we compare them with our experiences of the world, but they are also symbols of the inner reality of things as imaginatively apprehended by the artist. It is not necessary to repeat that the artist's vision is an intuition, i.e. it is immediate and direct, but conceptual thinking is a component element in it. We may say that it is a kind of angelic apprehension in which vision and knowledge are inextricably interfused.

IV

We are left with a final antinomy: Is art self-expression or does it also imply communication for others? When the poet publishes his poetry or the painter invites other people to see his pictures or the musician puts down his notes to be played by performers, each thinks of an audience and expects to be rewarded and appreciated. But when these artists see their visions, do they think of the public or is self-expression an end in itself? If they think of others, the inner sanctum is violated and the purity of art is lost. Art is the most intimate expression of the artist's personality. The artist retires into himself and is seldom anxious to prove the truth of his visions with reference to facts or laws. If this intimacy or privacy is gone, art would lose both its intensity and its directness. It may be said that artistic activity has its origin in the spiritual necessity for intimate self-expression, and that later on the artist draws pictures with paints or sings his songs or carves or builds with appropriate

materials. This later activity is differentiated from the primary artistic activity by its volitional character, and it can be called artistic only metaphorically. 'We cannot,' says Croce, 'will or not will our aesthetic vision: we can however will or not will to externalize it, or rather, to preserve and communicate to others, or not, the externalization thus produced.'[10] It may, indeed, be said that all artists intuit with the brain, and then they may paint with pigments or use some other materials. But on this view the true work of art is over as soon as the artist's intuitions have been elaborated in the brain.

The above theory seems at first sight to be unobjectionable. Art is the expression of the deepest impulses in the artist's soul and the fact that others are pleased with his work or that he wins wealth may be a mere accident. An artist, in so far as he is an artist, is the most indifferent and aloof of men. But the theory that art is expression and nothing else places the artist on an ivory tower where the air is too rarefied for him to breathe. What does the intuition in his brain consist of? It has passed the stage of vague, indistinct impressions and is a clear and distinct image, that is to say, it is already in a stage fit for communication, for a clear and distinct image is inherently communicable, and although the whole process is imaginal, the artist must be using mental materials from which the appropriate shape is wrought. But even this form is rudimentary, and actual practice would suggest that the artist's intuition develops in course of communication; words call forth words

and pigments and clay and marble reveal new possibilities in the process of manipulation.

The matter may be looked at from yet another point of view. Although the artist's emotions and ideas are his own and although he may feel the creative urge as primarily an impulse to self-expression, he can achieve artistic excellence only when he not merely feels his emotions or thinks out his thoughts but contemplates them as a vision. In other words, all artistic activity involves a process of 'distancing', and its chief characteristic is a combination of intensive apprehension and placid detachment; as Abhinavagupta points out, the artist feels this emotion as his own, but he also feels that it belongs to others. It is only when the painter or the sculptor is also a beholder or the poet the reader of his own poetry that creative activity can begin. The content of art consists of emotions and ideas the artist feels or thinks in himself, in his own unique way, but they are derived from his contact with the world, and thus his audience enters his work and art becomes potentially communicable.

It may be argued that art is art because of its form, and form is what the artist individually perceives. There can be no doubt that the artist is an artist only because he can conjure up certain visionary forms which are unique in the sense that no one else could have conceived them. The artist has his 'private' symbols and if other people try to appreciate them, they are like eavesdroppers who can only catch glimpses of what is going on inside.

It is, indeed, true that a poet, e.g. Yeats, reads his own meaning into life and creates such personal symbols as the Tower or the Winding Stair or the Gyre and also adds his own significance to historical and legendary objects and persons, such as Byzantine art or Helen or Leda. If, however, we try to explore the significance of these symbols, we find that we have to take account of their physical properties, dictionary meanings and other associations, and it becomes clear that the artist is not uninfluenced by the conventional meanings he supersedes. That is to say, he wants to show to himself and to others who can enter his world that these symbols have a core of significance hitherto unexplored. It must certainly be borne in mind that the artist who does not feel his emotions in his own way and who produces his works with an eye to the public is only a successful businessman rather than a creator in the proper sense of the term. But he is truly original only when he has assimilated into his own experiences the experiences of others, when he sees clearly what others have felt only vaguely and when he can speak and sing and draw as intimately for others as for himself. It is because of this intimate connexion between the artist and his audience, between expression and communication that the artist's private symbols become valued possessions of mankind.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

CHAPTER I

1. The quotations from the *Republic* are from *The Republic of Plato*, translated with Introduction and Notes by F.M. Cornford (Oxford University Press, 1951), and the other Platonic quotations in the book are in Jowett's translation.
2. *The Republic of Plato*, p. 88
3. ibid. p. 87
4. ibid. p. 85
5. ibid. p. 179
6. ibid. p. 83
7. *Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage and Other Essays* (1921), p. 150.
8. *Aesthetic* (1953), p. 2
9. *Plato: The Man and His Work* (1927), p. 306
10. *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1923), p. 395
11. *To the Lighthouse* (1932), p. 100

CHAPTER II

1. J.H. Muirhead : *Coleridge As Philosopher* (1930). p. 199
2. *The Dictionary of National Biography* (1887), vol. xi. p. 315 *Hours in a Library* (1919), vol. iii. In the essay on Coleridge in *Hours in a Library*, Leslie Stephen says that Coleridge was incapable of the concentration and steadfastness of thought expected of a philosopher (p. 342), but he recognizes Coleridge's powers as a subtle dialectician (p. 336), and admits, too, that he himself belongs to an 'antagonistic' school.
3. *Biographia Literaria* (ed. G. Sampson, 1920), Introd. pp. xxiv ff.
4. *Shakespearian Criticism* (1930), vol. i, p. xlviii

5. *Biographia Literaria* (ed. J. Shawcross, 1949, hereafter referred to as *B.L.*) vol. ii, p. 10
6. ibid. p. 221
7. ibid. p. 56
8. ibid. p 242
9. ibid. p. 12
10. Quoted by Muirhead, op. cit., p. 84
11. There is an interesting article on *Coleridge's Critical Terminology* by J. Isaacs in *Essays and Studies* (English Association, 1935) vol. xxi, pp. 86–104.
12. *Theory of Life*
13. *B.L.* vol. ii, p. 248
14. ibid. p. 249
15. *B.L.* vol. i, p 202
16. *B.L.* vol. ii, pp. 253–4
17. B.L. vol. i, p. 183, p. 202
18. *The Friend*; Second Section. The importance of these essays is stressed by Herbert Read in *Coleridge as Critic* (1949), pp. 19 ff.
19. *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and Other Dramatists*, hereafter referred to as *Lectures on Shakespeare* (The World's Classics, 363), p. 43, *Table Talk* (23 June 1934).
20. I.A. Richards: *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934), pp. 72–99; Basil Willey: *Coleridge on Imagination and Fancy* (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, (1946), pp. 173–87.
21. *B.L.* vol. ii, p. 13; *The Friend*: Second Section, Essay I. Coleridge cites the following example from *Venus and Adonis*:

    Look how a bright star shooteth from the sky;
    So glides he in the night from Venus' eye!

In his commentary Coleridge points out that it is the yearning, yet hopelessness, of the enamoured gazer and the shadowy ideal character of the whole which contribute to the imaginative beauty. (*Lectures on Shakespeare*, p. 44)

22. op. cit., p. 98
23. *B.L.* vol. ii, p 258
24. *Lectures on Shakespeare*, p 68
25. op. cit., p. 177
26. *B.L.* vol. ii, p. 239
27. ibid. p. 243
28. bk. iii, ch. 8
29. *Lectures on Shakespeare*, p. 242

Chapter III

1. *Appreciations* : *Style*
2. *The Renaissance* : *The School of Giorgione*
3. ibid.
4 *Appreciations* : *Love's Labours Lost*
5. *Appreciations* : *Measure for Measure*
6. ibid.
7. *Appreciations* : *Wordsworth*
8. *Selected Essays* (1948), p. 400
9. *De Rerum Natura* (tr. R. C. Treveleyan), III, 971-2
10. *Marius the Epicurean*, ch. ix
11. ibid. ch. xxiii
12. *Inspiration and Poetry* (1955), p. 214
13. op. cit., I, 699-700, iv, 476-9
14. ibid. II, 1169-72
15. *Marius the Epicurean*, ch. xxviii
16 *The Renaissance* : *The School of Giorgione*
17. *Marius the Epicurean*, ch. xiv
18. *The Renaissance* : *Conclusion*
19 *Appreciations* : *Postscript*
20. *Appreciations* : *Style*
21 *The Renaissance* : *Leonardo Da Vinci*
The School of Giorgione

22. *The Renaissance* : *The School of Giorgione*
Winckelmann
23. *Appreciations* : *Measure for Measure*

CHAPTER IV

1. *Aesthetic*, p. 1, p. 55
2. ibid. p. 16
3. *Ariosto, Shakespeare, and Corneille* (1929), hereafter referred to as *Ariosto etc.*, p. 126
4. *Aesthetic*, p. 108
5. ibid. pp. 32–3
6. ibid. p. 96
7. ibid. p. 34
8. ibid. pp. 4–5
9. *Ariosto etc.*, p. 152
10. *Aesthetic*, p. 3
11. This analysis is based on the distinction drawn by Croce between the materials and the form of art. (*Ariosto etc.*, pp. 49–52)
12. *Aesthetic*, pp. 13ff
European Literature in the Nineteenth Century (1924), p. 311
13. *Goethe* (1923), p. 186
14. ibid. p. 53
15. *The Poetry of Dante* (1922), hereafter referred to as *Dante*, p. 91
16. *Aesthetic*, p. 90
17. ibid. p. 79
18. ibid. p. 6
19. *Ariosto etc.*, pp. 50ff, 69

It should be pointed out that Croce here seeks to draw a distinction, ideally conceived, between sentiments which are the 'raw material' of art and 'the sentiment of harmony' which is its 'content', and this sentiment, again, is to be

ideally distinguished from the form in which it is expressed. When it is borne in mind that the sentiment of harmony is identified with the *tone* of the expression, which is one of the 'properties' of style, the threefold distinction posited here seems to be artificial and not even ideally conceivable. It may be pointed out further that when Croce enumerates the four stages of aesthetic production in *Aesthetic* (p.96), he does not draw this distinction between material and content.

20. *Aesthetic*, p. 112
21. *Dante*, p. 181
22. *Ariosto etc.*, p. 198. Here Croce even finds superior emotional quality in Shakespeare's comedies.
23. *Goethe*, p. 56
24. *European Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (1924), p. 336
25. ibid. p. 73
26. *Croce as Shakespearean Critic* (1922)
27. *Dante*, pp. 242–4
28. *Goethe*, p. 67
29. ibid. pp. 119–20
30. ibid. pp. 122–3
31. *Aesthetic*, p. 122
32. ibid. p. 2
33. *Ariosto etc.*, chs. xiii–xiv
34. *Goethe*, pp. 38–9.
35. *An Essay Towards A Theory of Art* (1926), p. 52
36. *The Principles of Art* (1950), p. 295
37 ibid. p. 297

Chapter V

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Selected Works* (1951), pp. 149–54
2. *Capital* (1954), vol. i, p. 19 (*Afterword to the Second German Ed.*)

3. *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1947), p. 48
4. *Anti-Dühring* (1947), p. 61
5. Plekhanov: *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (Calcutta, 1944) pp. 91ff. The principle of coincidence of opposites is not an invention of Marxists, but it correctly expresses the Marxist point of view in philosophy.
6. *Capital*, vol. i, p. 10
7. *Anti-Dühring*, p. 66, p. 69
8. ibid. p. 168-70
9. *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 86

It is because Marxism tries to strike a middle course between idealism and materialism that it finds itself involved in contradictions, and the earlier writers always complain that they are misunderstood. Marxism makes an indirect confession of confused thinking when Plekhanov (op. cit., p. 51) says that Marx and Engels were not characterized by 'a one-sided way of looking at things but only by an inclination towards monism'.

10. *Back to Methuselah* (1928), p. 266
11. *Socialism : Utopian and Scientific*, p. 120
12. *Letters* (Indian edition, reprinted from the 1934 English edition), p. 120
13. Croce : *Historical Materialism and Economics of Karl Marx*, p. 18
    Plekhanov : op. cit., pp. 46-7, 58
14. *History of English Literature* (1872), vol. i, p. 13.
15. Plekhanov mentions Taine (op. cit., p. 64) but looks upon him as an idealist.
16. *Literature and Art* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Selections from their Writings* (1947), hereafter referred to as *Lit. and Art*, p. 76
17. ibid. p. 25
18. ibid. p. 41, p. 52, pp. 56-9
19. ibid. pp. 16-7

20. p. 230 (1954), *Selected Works* (1951), vol. ii, p. 75
21. *The Triple Thinkers* (1952), p. 197
22. *Lit. and Art*, p. 45
23. ibid. p. 52
24. p. 84
25. *Capital*, vol. i, p. 79
26. *Lit. and Art*, pp. 14-5
27. *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 178
28. *Lit. and Art*, p. 60
29. ibid. pp. 19-20
30. *Studies in European Realism* (1950), pp. 47ff.
31. ibid. pp. 53-4
32. ibid. p. 176
33. *Illusion and Reality* (1937), p. 39
34. *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1948), pp 1-19
35. ibid. p. 7
36. *A Good Man Fallen Among the Fabians* (1950), p. 162
37. op. cit., 48
38. *Lit. and Art*, p. 61

Chapter VI

1. *Beauty and Other Forms of Value* (1933), p. 132
2. *Philosophical and Literary Pieces* (1939), p. 220
3. ibid. p. 230
4. *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, p. 72
5. ibid. p. 237
6. *Speculations* (1936), p. 108
7. *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, p. 46
8. *Philosophical and Literary Pieces*. p. 249
9. *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, p 60
   Philosophical and Literary Pieces, p. 246
10. *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, pp. 116ff.
11. ibid. p. 129

12. ibid. p. 104
13. *Philosophical and Literary Pieces*, p. 253
14. ibid. p. 259
15. *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910), p. 34
    Beauty and Other Forms of Value, pp. 145-6
16. *Philosophical and Literary Pieces*, p. 230
17. ibid. p. 224
18. *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, p. 179
19. p. 100, pp. 122-3

CHAPTER VII

1. *Practical Criticism* (1929), p. 286
2. *Principles of Criticism* (1944), hereafter referred to as *Principles*, p. 59
3. ibid. pp. 110-111
4. ibid. p. 251
5. *Interpretation in Teaching* (1938), hereafter referred to as *I.T.*, p. viii and p. 48. Here, and more especially in *Speculative Instruments* (1955), Richards seems inclined to replace 'context' by 'nexus'.
6. *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), p. 146
7. ibid. p. 210
7. ibid. p. 210
8. p. 240. Although here Richards only classifies the different senses in which the word 'imagination' is currently used, the description he gives of metaphor seems to reflect his own views.
9. *I.T.*, p. 48; *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), hereafter referred to as *P.R.*, pp. 93-4
10. *P.R.*, p. 117
11. p. 127
12. ibid. pp. 125-6
13. *Practical Criticism*, p. 186

14. *The Meaning of Meaning*, p. 259
15. ibid. p. 377
16. *Determinations* (1934), p. 227
17. *Principles*, pp. 288-9
18. ibid. p. 48
19. *P.R.*, p. 40, pp. 64-5; *How To Read a Page* (1934), p. 237
20. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1947), p. 1
21. ibid. p. 57
22. ibid. p. 63, pp. 86-8
23. ibid. p. 160
24. Bradley : *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1949), p. 490
25. *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951), p. 74
26. ibid. pp. 218-9
27. ibid. p. 234. Empson's suggestion that by 'daily beauty' Iago means smarter clothes and upper class manners takes away from the force and significance of the passage.
28. ibid. p. 238. 'The hunting of the meaning of meaning seems perilously like the hunting of the snark.' (*T.L.S.* 27 March, 1937).
29. *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (1935), pp. 213ff; *Shakespeare's Iterative Imagery* (*Aspects of Shakespeare*, 1933, pp. 258ff.)
30. *Shakespeare's Imagery*, pp. 318-9. It must be conceded that for Spurgeon the problem in *Hamlet* is not predominantly that of individual will and reason.
31. *The Wheel of Fire* (1937), p. 15
32. *The Shakespearian Tempest* (1940), pp. 16-7
33. ibid. p. 93
34. ibid. p. 176, p. 210, p. 217
35. *Poetry : Direct and Oblique* (1934), p. 27
36. ibid. p. 43
37. How puzzling Tillyard's classification is will appear from the following comment on *The Prelude*: 'Only

through being direct could he achieve his proper obliquity.' (ibid. pp. 96-7)

CHAPTER VIII

1. *The Meaning of Meaning*, pp. 316-7
2. *Dhvanyāloka*, I. 4 (*Locana*)
3. op. cit., pp. 366
4. Schopenhauer glorified music above all the other arts, because in music he saw an expression of the Will itself. In a sense he was anticipated by Schelling who had found in music the very ideal rhythm of the universe. Modern writers avoid these metaphysical subtleties and attribute the primacy of music to its freedom from ideological content.
5. *Dhvanyāloka*, I. 21
6. ibid. IV. 4
7. ibid. II. 22
8. *Kāvyaprakāsa*, I
9. *Dhvanyāloka*, I. 13
10. ibid. I. 4, 9, 10
11. *Dhvanyāloka*. I. 13 (*Locana*)
12. *Abhinava—Bhārati* (Kavi's edition of *Natyasāstram*, 1926), vol. i, pp. 274ff.
13. *Dhvanyāloka*, I, 4 (*Locana*)
14. *Dhvanyāloka*, II. 4 (*Locana*)
    Abhinava-Bhārati, vol. i, p. 278
15. *Dhvanyāloka*, II. 12

CHAPTER IX

1. *Old and New Masters* (1919), p. 142
2. *Simplicity and Tolstoy*
3. Maud Bodkin : *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1934)
4. *A New Study of English Poetry* (1919), p. 66

5. E. Bullough : *Br. Journal of Psychology* (vol. v, June 1912), pp. 87-118
   J.E Downey : *Creative Imagination* (1929), pp. 194-5
6. *Art* (1949), p. 25
7. *A Defence of Poetry*
8. *Feeling and Form* (1953), p. 27

Chapter X

1. *Vision and Design* (Pelican, 1937), pp. 11-39
2. ibid. pp. 48-9
3. *Art*, p. 163
4. This is not the reason which Aristotle himself gives for the primacy assigned to Plot, but such a conclusion may legitimately be drawn from *Poetics*.
5. op. cit., p. 153, p 193
6. op. cit., p. 48

I is significant that Roger Fry starts by describing the sensually logical conformities as the product of a particular feeling and then abandons the word 'feeling' for 'idea'.

7. Herbert Read : *The Meaning of Art* (Pelican, 1949), pp. 21ff
8. Susanne K. Langer : op. cit., p. 7
9. Preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*
10. *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1923), p. 15
11. B.L. vol. ii, p. 16.
12. It need hardly be added that the legend, too, is Homeric rather than English or Roman.
13. *Oxford Lectures*, p. 174

Chapter XI

1. *The Wheel of Fire*, p. 4
2. *Vision and Design*, p. 24
3. *Art*, p. 213
4. *The Meaning of Art*, p. 25

5. ibid. p. 32
6. *Poetics* : Sec. 4 (tr. Butcher)
7. Letter no. 123 (ed. Buxton Forman, 1935)
8. Preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*;
   Preface to *Getting Married*;
   Our Theatres in the Nineties (1932), vol. iii, p. 315
9. *Last Lectures* (1939), pp. 40ff.
10. *Laughter* (1935), p. 157
11. Preface to *Pleasant Unpleasant*

Chapter XII

1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th edition), vol. ii, p. 274
2. *My Life*, ch. iv, ch. viii
3. ibid. ch. viii
4. ibid. ch. iv, ch. xiv, ch. xxx.
5. *Music* (H.U.L., 1949), p. 7, p. 15
6. *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1926), pp. 122–3
7. M. Bertrand is quoted by Langer, op. cit., pp. 157–8
8. *Speculations: Modern Art and its Philosophy*
9. *Philebus* 51 (Jowett, 3rd edition, vol. iv, p. 625)
10. G.A. Flanagan: *How to Understand Modern Art*, p. 40
11. P.C. Wilson: *Wagner's Dramas and Greek Tragedy* (1919), p. 65
12. Although Clive Bell does not cite this particular example, he repeatedly asserts that facts, ideas and representational qualities, indeed everything that does not contribute to formal significance, should be regarded as irrelevant to art.
13. op. cit., 75–94
14. op. cit., 49–71
15. *Laokoon* (tr. Bell, 1879), ch. x, ch. xviii
16. *The Meaning of Art*, p. 36

CHAPTER XIII

1. *Works*, (1956), vol. i.
2. *History of My Religious Opinions* (1865), pp. 30-35
3. op. cit., p. 308
4. *The Waste Land* : *Notes*
5. *The Meaning of Art*, p 30
6. Letter no. 87
7. *Dhvanyāloka*, II. 4 (*Locana*)
8. op. cit., p. 225
9. 'Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; since the productions of nature are the materials of art.' (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. ch. ii)
10. *Aesthetic*, p. 111

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